

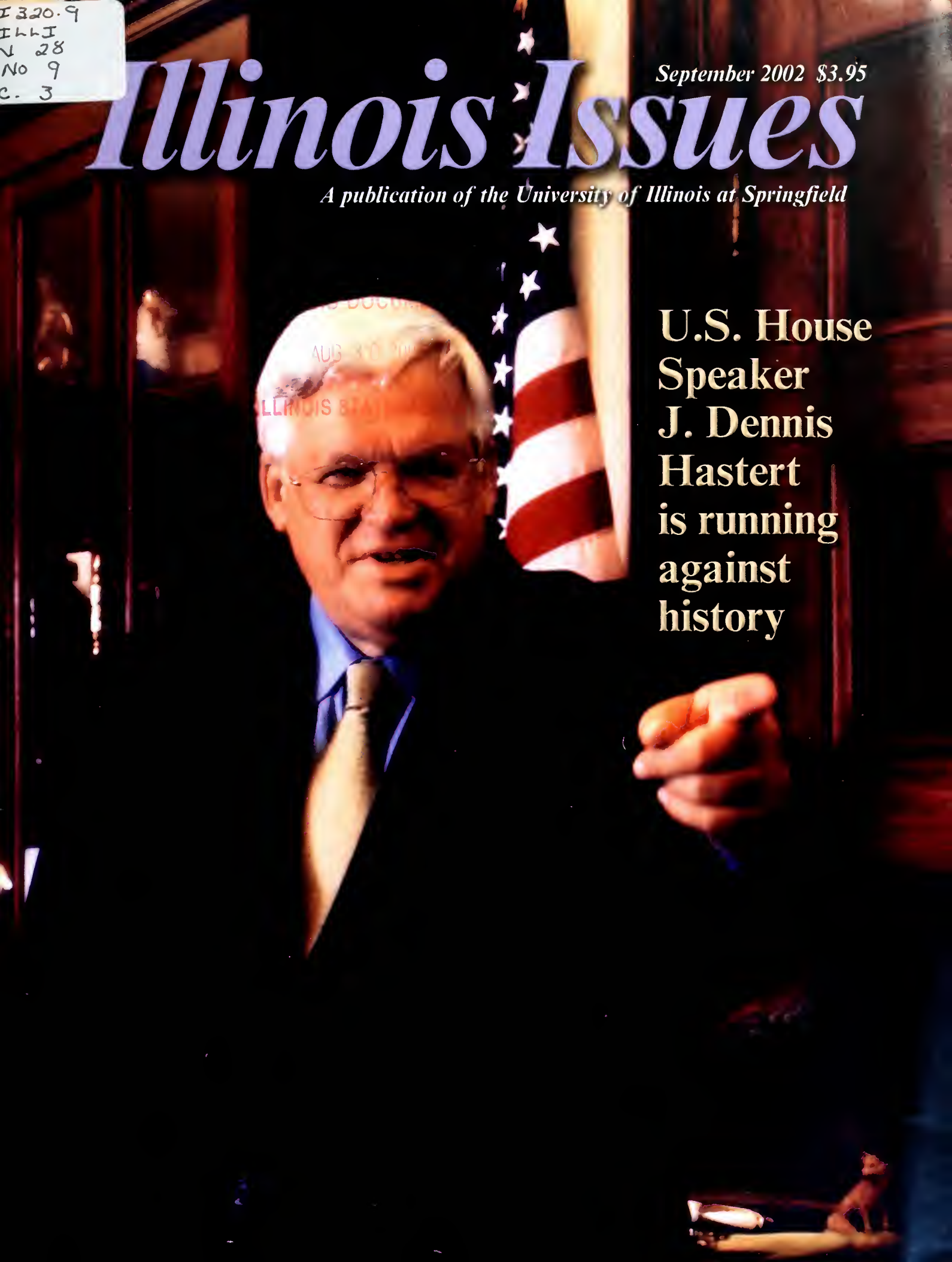
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September 2002 \$3.95

A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield

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J. Dennis
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is running
against
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And he was arguably history's most inflamed anti-smoker.

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Recognizing he was making little if any headway with moral suasion, the king decided to tax tobacco into oblivion. Or make the attempt.

But *Wall Street Journal* reporter Tara Parker-Pope, who draws this portrait of the king in *Cigarettes: Anatomy of an Industry From Seed to Smoke*, suggests James was hobbled by mixed motives.

Edited by Robert L. Rabin and Stephen D. Sugarman, Oxford University Press, 2001

Tobacco: A Cultural History of How an Exotic Plant Seduced Civilization

by Iain Gately, Grove Press, 2001

His hatred of smoking, she concludes, was fueled in no small part by fear of economic and political rivals. His enemies, the Spaniards, controlled much of the world's tobacco trade. "Years later, when it became clear that tobacco represented vast revenues for his kingdom, the king's anti-smoking stance waned."

Ever since, governments have shared his ambivalence. They have taxed tobacco and subsidized it, restricted it and penalized it. And, along the way, they have profited from it — and paid the social and medical costs of its use. In short, over the centuries, governments have adopted shifting, contradictory and sometimes self-interested policies toward the habit.

Illinoisans can attest to that. This past summer, their government increased the cigarette tax — which some argued will help trim the number

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Parker-Pope's contribution is a detailed analysis of the industry, and how it has — since Christopher Columbus encountered those first few leaves — managed to overcome every social, political and legal hurdle put in its path. Her book is studded with numbers that aim to stun: U.S. smokers spend about \$53 billion a year, more than Americans spend to buy clothes for their children (\$26.9 billion); in the United States, federal, state and local governments collect about \$13.2 billion annually in tobacco taxes — \$50 for every man, woman and child.

Regulating Tobacco, edited by Robert L. Rabin and Stephen D. Sugarman, is a more subdued compilation of scholarly assessments on policy strategies. The research and writing was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Iain Gately's lively *Tobacco: A Cultural History of How an Exotic Plant Seduced Civilization* explores the social symbolism in tobacco

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Peggy Boyer Long



THIS DOCUMENT
IS A STATE LIE

Given tobacco's hold on human culture, government policies are unlikely to snuff it out

by Peggy Boyer Long

In 1604, King James I of England increased the tobacco tax by 4,000 percent.

Though his methods might seem extreme, in many respects this monarch foreshadowed modern debates about smoking and government's strategies for control. He was among the first to recognize that smoking is addictive and bad for the lungs. He likely was first to criticize second-hand smoke and first to realize the role peer pressure and fashion play in marketing.

And he was arguably history's most inflamed anti-smoker.

King James sponsored what appears to have been the first public debate on the subject at Oxford University and issued, anonymously, a poorly received treatise on its evils, *Counter Blaste to Tobacco*. "Many in this kingdom," he complained, "have had such a continual use of taking this unsavory smoke, as now they are not able to forbear the same, no more than an old drunkard can abide to be sober, without falling into an incurable weakness and evil constitution."

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Cigarettes: Anatomy of an Industry from Seed to Smoke

by Tara Parker-Pope, *The New Press*, 2001

Regulating Tobacco

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Ever since, governments have shared his ambivalence. They have taxed tobacco and subsidized it, restricted it and penalized it. And, along the way, they have profited from it — and paid the social and medical costs of its use. In short, over the centuries, governments have adopted shifting, contradictory and sometimes self-interested policies toward the habit.

Illinoisans can attest to that. This past summer, their government increased the cigarette tax — which some argued will help trim the number

of smokers — while simultaneously cutting spending for some programs designed to discourage smoking, including a series of well-received television commercials written by and for teens.

Fortunately, three recently published books on the tobacco trade and government's evolving relationship to it might offer some context, if not solace, for this political schizophrenia.

Parker-Pope's contribution is a detailed analysis of the industry, and how it has — since Christopher Columbus encountered those first few leaves — managed to overcome every social, political and legal hurdle put in its path. Her book is studded with numbers that aim to stun: U.S. smokers spend about \$53 billion a year, more than Americans spend to buy clothes for their children (\$26.9 billion); in the United States, federal, state and local governments collect about \$13.2 billion annually in tobacco taxes — \$50 for every man, woman and child.

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TRANSITIONS

Illinois Issues has a new publisher. Michael E. Morsch arrived last summer, and we've made a few adjustments to accommodate "the new guy." Mike's column, "Publisher's gallery," appears on page 40. His purpose, he says, is to take a light-hearted view of politics and public issues. "The approach will be tongue-in-cheek, and I hope readers will take it in the spirit in which it is meant."

He encourages readers to contact him with any comments, suggestions or questions. He can be reached at 217-206-6521 or by e-mail at morsch.michael@uis.edu.

There are plenty of changes in store for Illinoisans, too. This month, and next, we'll report on the state political campaigns.

And we call your attention to two pieces in this issue that highlight shifts in the American steel industry (page 31) and in national energy policy (page 34). Both of these developments will have long-term impacts on Illinois.

cultivation and consumption.

Read together, these books provide a comprehensive overview of a complex subject. Granted, a perusal of 500 years of recorded tobacco history is unlikely to assuage the average Illinois smoker's financial pain. But perhaps it would help to know there's nothing new in the state's approach.

In fact, the editors of *Regulating Tobacco*, taking momentary leave from their collection's measured tones, write that "a consensus has arisen [nation-wide] that governmental intervention to control tobacco use is not only legitimate but essential."

Thus, on July 1, Illinois took another step down a long-familiar road. The state cigarette excise tax went from 58 cents to 98 cents on that date (see pages 12 and 42), pushing the price of a pack of smokes to \$5 in Springfield bars near the Capitol.

Supporters hope the 40-cent hike will help bolster the state's faltering bottom line by generating some \$230 million in new revenue, and help cut the number of smokers by an indeterminate number.

In the first month, the tax had indeed generated an additional \$12 million, according to the Illinois Department of Revenue. This much is clear, then: Tobacco has always been a lucrative revenue-enhancer, to use the political parlance. What hasn't been clear is whether higher taxes reduce smoking. Cause and effect is difficult to track, and the national data has, until recently, been subject to challenge.

However, in their contribution to *Regulating Tobacco*, Frank J. Chaloupka, Melanie Wakefield and Christina Czart argue that increasingly sophisticated economic research "clearly demonstrates that increases in the price of [cigarettes and other tobacco products] will lead to reductions in their use." That is especially true for young smokers — because they are less likely to be addicted, and because they tend to have fewer disposable dollars. Chaloupka and Czart are economists, while Wakefield is a research scientist.

All were associated with the University of Illinois at Chicago when their essay on tobacco taxation was written.

In contrast to the federal government, which taxes tobacco mainly to raise revenue, they write, the states have been more active in using the tax as a means to curb tobacco use.

Whatever the purpose behind tobacco tax policy, Americans have less reason to complain than the citizens of western Europe, where more than 70 percent of the retail price of cigarettes is tax. In the United States, about 40 percent of the money spent on a pack of cigarettes goes to federal, state and local tax authorities.

For that matter, Illinoisans have less reason to complain than the residents of other states. According to the Federation of Tax Administrators' Web site (taxadmin.org), Illinois' cigarette tax is a far cry from Massachusetts', which is in first place with state cigarette taxes of \$1.51 a pack.

Of the 18 states that raised cigarette taxes over this past year, Illinois falls somewhere in the middle of the pack for those increases that took effect this year. The lowest increase, 7 cents a pack, was imposed in the tobacco-producing state of Tennessee. The highest, 75 cents, was imposed in Massachusetts. Some states approved additional increases that will take effect in subsequent years.

The good news, for all but the most greedy revenueur, is that the number of smokers has declined over the past 40 years, from about 50 percent of the U.S. population to about 25 percent, due, perhaps, to social shifts.

Still, Gately's book reminds that tobacco has a documented history in the northern part of the American continent that stretches back to before 2500 B.C. Based on archaeological evidence, he writes, "its prehistoric use appears to have been near universal."

And, given this hold on human culture, it's unlikely, as King James discovered, that smoking can be obliterated — no matter government's political or policy stance. □

Peggy Boyer Long can be reached at Peggyboy@aol.com.

Illinois Issues

A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield

September 2002

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Subscription questions: Illinois Issues, Subscription Division, P.O. Box 2795, Springfield, IL 62708-2795 or call 1-800-508-0266. Hours are 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Central Time, Monday-Friday (except holidays). **Subscriptions:** \$39.95 one year/ \$72 two years/ \$105 three years; student rate is \$20 a year. Individual copy is \$3.95. Back issue is \$5. Illinois Issues is indexed in the PAIS Bulletin and is available electronically on our home page: <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>. Illinois Issues (ISSN 0738-9663) is published monthly, except during the summer when July and August are combined. Periodical postage paid at Springfield, IL, and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Illinois Issues, Subscription Division, P.O. Box 19243, Springfield, IL 62794-9243.

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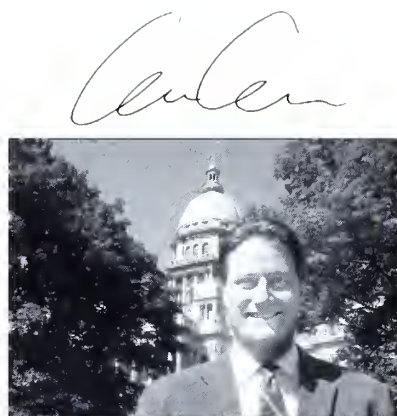
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Federal welfare reform expires this month, but it's still on the negotiating table

by Aaron Chambers

Nuance can be everything in lawmaking. That's certainly the case for federal welfare reform, which is still on the negotiating table.

Five years after it redefined public assistance as temporary, rather than an open-ended entitlement, the reform law is set to expire at the end of this month. When lawmakers return to Capitol Hill from their Labor Day break, they must decide what the next five years will hold — for needy families and for the states that administer the welfare program.

Or they could take a pass. They could simply vote to extend the 1996 reforms, which provide \$16.5 billion in block grants to the states each year, and tackle eligibility questions next year.

Unless lawmakers on opposite sides of the debate get over their differences in a hurry, this is the likely scenario.

The states, which must operate their welfare programs within parameters set by the feds, would prefer the first option, especially in light of the growing budget shortfalls many state governments face. They want to know how much money will be available to meet the needs of their recipients.

"We are strongly encouraging Congress to pass something this year so that states have some certainty about the money they're going to get

At issue for the states is the ability to be creative with their welfare-to-work efforts. Illinois, for instance, has been one of the nation's most innovative states in designing programs to move welfare recipients into the workforce.

for the next several years," says Jack Tweedie, director of the Children and Families Program at the National Conference of State Legislatures. "Also, they want some certainty about the rules they're going to have to operate under."

At issue for the states is the ability to be creative with their welfare-to-work efforts. Illinois, for instance, has been one of the nation's most innovative states in designing programs to move welfare recipients into the workforce.

For state Human Services Secretary Linda Renée Baker, retaining the freedom to operate such programs is one of the state's two priorities with regard to reauthorization of the federal law. The other is sustained funding. Illinois receives an annual

\$585 million federal grant and allocates \$430 million in state funds.

"When we are able to craft an Illinois-specific program for the people in our mix, we've been successful," she says. "We don't want them to give us a program, then put a whole host of strings on the money."

But the U.S. Senate, controlled by Democrats, and the House, controlled by Republicans, haven't been able to agree on what the rules should be.

The White House wants states to push more welfare recipients into the workforce and require them to work more hours. The House approved a measure that mirrors that proposal.

The Senate proposal isn't as strict. That measure, which passed the Finance Committee but hasn't been debated by the full chamber, would not, for instance, require as many hours of work.

"There are huge differences between the administration's proposal and the Senate Finance proposal," says Grant Collins II, chief of staff for the Office of Family Assistance at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "And, quite honestly, there's a question as to whether these things could be worked through in a timely way so that we might have a bill."

Welfare reform, by most accounts, has been a glorious success.

States made huge cuts in the number of people who are dependent on cash assistance. This accomplishment has been attributed to the law's mandates for work, and to the soaring economy of the 1990s.

The number of families on welfare nationwide dropped from a historical high of 5.1 million in 1994 to 2.2 million last July. While caseloads in some states have increased in the past year, reflecting a sagging economy, those increases have been slight.

Illinois was exceptionally successful in reducing its caseload. The number of families dependent on cash assistance dropped almost 74 percent from 188,069 in 1997 to 49,178 in June, according to the state human services department. Meanwhile, the proportion of recipients who are working increased from 27.1 percent to 36 percent.

The University Consortium on Welfare Reform, a cooperative effort of Northwestern University and other research centers, studied, among other issues, the relationship between Illinois welfare recipients and work. In a May report to the state, investigators concluded there was a "significant increase" between 1998 and 2001 in the proportion of respondents relying solely on income from work, while the proportion of respondents relying solely on welfare went down.

At the same time, though, the proportion of respondents who left the welfare rolls but were not working increased 10 percent. "Overall, large declines in [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families] use were not matched by comparable increases in work [between 1998 and 2001], indicating that some families were left with neither work nor welfare as a source of support, although they may have had other sources of support," the report concludes. "Efforts to decrease welfare dependence, therefore, appear to have been very successful, while efforts to increase work were moderately successful."

In fact, a recent report by the Illinois Poverty Summit concludes that poverty rates in Illinois have increased slightly over the period of welfare reform.

State human services officials,

Illinois has been exceptionally successful in reducing its caseload. The number of families dependent on cash assistance has dropped almost 74 percent.

however, dismiss any suggestion that government efforts to cut the welfare roles contribute to poverty. They note that people simply have more income when they work. "An individual who is working is far better off than an individual who is receiving that assistance check," Baker says.

Striking a deal on a new welfare law for another five years by October 1 would be an impressive feat for Congress. Lawmakers are preoccupied with many other pressing issues.

"We have a very brief period of time here and a very heavy schedule with appropriations bills, the new Department of Homeland Security and a variety of issues," says U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, a Springfield Democrat and a member of Democratic Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle's leadership team. "So whether we'll be able to reach it this year is uncertain."

The 1996 law, which gives the states great flexibility in spending their grants, does provide some guidelines. Chief among them: Individuals can take cash assistance for only five years over the course of a lifetime.

This state adopted the federal limit. However, Illinois stops the clock while a recipient is working 30 hours per week (35 hours a week for two-parent families). And, under the state's Work Pays program, one of the first of its kind in the nation, recipients lose only one dollar of cash aid for every three dollars they make on the job.

According to Baker, this is the sort of flexibility necessary to make welfare-to-work successful. But Congress must decide how much freedom the next

federal policy should grant.

And there are substantial differences between the two bills in this regard. The House version would require each state to get 70 percent of its caseload into the workforce over five years. Currently, the requirement is 50 percent. The House measure also would require workers to put in 40 hours a week to continue to receive aid, up from 30 hours under current law.

The Senate measure would increase the work participation rate to 70 percent by 2007, but the work requirement would stay at 30 hours per week.

Moreover, lawmakers don't agree on what activities should qualify as "work." Some Democrats want a broad definition under which welfare recipients could count time spent in college, job training and drug rehabilitation. The White House supports a more conservative definition.

"The only way out of poverty is a job," says Collins, of the federal health and human services department. "So, to the degree that they are engaged in activities that closely reflect the types of things that they're going to have to do to get out of poverty, we will support that."

The White House also would phase out the so-called caseload reduction credit, whereby states are rewarded with a reduction in the required percentage of their clients who must find work. States would instead get credit for getting clients into jobs.

There are other distinctions. The Senate measure would increase child-care funding by \$5.5 billion over five years; the House version would add only another \$1 billion on top of current funding. The aid is key because welfare recipients require extra money for child care if they spend more time on the job.

Meanwhile, the states are clamoring for an immediate five-year reauthorization. "I know what the states are saying," Durbin says. "But let's make sure we give the states the flexibility to deal with reduced revenues and different demands."

The details pose the hurdles. And neither side appears ready to jump. □

Aaron Chambers can be reached at statehousebureau@aol.com.

BRIEFLY

Dickson Mounds celebrates 75 years

In 1927, a 29-year-old chiropractor named Don Dickson began digging in ancient burial mounds on his family's farm in Fulton County.

"He couldn't have guessed that a large museum named after him would be standing there 75 years later," says Judith Franke, director of Dickson Mounds Museum near Lewistown.

Don Dickson's farm, a 19.5-acre site that has been expanded to 2,304 acres, is now owned by the state and run by the Illinois State Museum in Springfield. On September 8th, the Dickson Mounds Museum will celebrate 75 years of operation, part of the state museum's own 125th anniversary.

Early in its history, Dickson Mounds hosted as many as 50,000 visitors a year who came to see the burial sites, which eventually reached 237. The ancient remains were uncovered but left in place. Then, in the 1930s, archaeologists from the University of Chicago excavated other sites in the area, piecing together 12,000 years of human habitation in the Illinois River valley. The people Dickson and the scientists found buried in the mounds belonged to the Late Woodland and Mississippian cultures, dating to between 700 and 1,000 years ago.

In more recent times, the site was controversial. It was nearly closed in the early 1990s, when Illinoisans became more sensitive to the concerns of Native Americans, who didn't want the graves on display. In 1991, Gov. Jim Edgar announced the burial ground would be closed permanently, but the state would provide major funding for renovation of the museum.

"In the past 75 years, Dickson Mounds has had to continually shift objectives, priorities and sometimes even overall direction in response to the changing values and resources of the world we live in," says Franke.

The anniversary celebration will focus on local history, including a play presented on a new outdoor stage and exhibits in two renovated buildings that have been moved to the site: an 1839 schoolhouse from the pioneer village of Waterford, and an octagonal toll house that was part of a failed plank toll road in Canton.

Beverley Scobell

This toddler is grinding corn the way early Illinoisans did, one of many activities for children at Dickson Mounds Museum. The grinding stones are real artifacts, estimated to be about 1,000 years old.



Photograph courtesy Dickson Mounds

BACK TO SCHOOL

Chickenpox shot required

Parents who enrolled their kids in day care or kindergarten this fall found that a ninth vaccination has been added to the required childhood inoculations against such diseases as measles, mumps and diphtheria.

As of July 1, a new state law requires that children as young as 2 years old who enter kindergarten or day care for the first time must prove they received the chickenpox shot by their first birthday or that they have had the disease.

Chickenpox is a virus characterized by an itchy rash that progresses to blisters. Dr. John Lumpkin, the state's public health director, calls it a serious and sometimes deadly disease that affects thousands of Illinoisans each year. "This requirement is being implemented to protect the children of our state from a preventable disease."

The move has plenty of support. "As a childcare provider, I think it's great," says Cheri Burgess, owner and director of Roxana Day Care Center and Preschool. "Children don't miss time in school, and it keeps us from having a lull."

Not every parent thinks the vaccination is necessary, though, (see *Illinois Issues*, September 2000, page 24). Sherry Weid of Sleepy Hollow doesn't. Her son received the first two shots in the Hepatitis B vaccination series when he was 10 years old. He had an adverse reaction, she says, and four years later he has to get a weekly infusion of gamma globulin. Since then, she has volunteered on the Illinois Vaccine Aware Coalition's hot line, which works to educate people about vaccines, their ingredients and side effects.

Yet, Deborah Knoll, manager of personal health services with the Madison County Health Department, says her agency has been giving the vaccination for the past three years with no reported adverse reactions. "Chickenpox is a normal childhood disease, and any deaths that occur are usually because the child has an underlying condition," she says.

Illinois is the 35th state to require the chickenpox vaccination for children who are entering school or day care.

Danette Watt

LABOR CON?

Inmates train for jobs they might never get

Some prison-based training programs are frustrating ex-offenders' job searches. That's because many employers don't value prison-learned skills, and because, in some cases, prisoners are trained for professions that may deny licenses to applicants with criminal records.

Those are two findings of a Chicago Urban League Study. Researchers Marcia Festen and Sunny Fischer talked to 72 ex-felons about their job prospects. Many credited prison — with its opportunities for education and training — as "saving my life." But optimism faded when employers routinely turned them away. In fact, only 19 of those Festen and Fischer interviewed were working, a statistic that is roughly in keeping with the national average.

This year, an estimated 25,000 inmates will walk out of Illinois prisons. Each will have \$50 in cash for bus fare. Each will have completed PreStart, a two-week preparatory course about life outside of prison. And a few will have taken coursework or completed job training programs.

But some prison initiatives put ex-cons on career paths that could dead-end at legal restrictions, such as one that trains prisoners to work in nail salons, though nail technicians may be denied licenses if they have committed felonies and certain other crimes.

"You now have the possibility of someone being trained by one state agency and not having the opportunity to get a license from another state agency," says Sharron Matthews, the public policy director of the Safer Foundation, a Chicago organization that helps ex-offenders.

A DePaul University study conducted two years ago found that 57 of the state's 98 occupations that require licenses had restrictions for people with criminal records. "Since then, we've done a follow-up study. Of those 57, we're looking at the ones that most ex-offenders, given their demographics and backgrounds, would be most interested in applying for, if they were to apply in the first place," says Matthews. Safer will release the findings this fall.

In the meantime, the problem hasn't gone unnoticed at the Department of Professional Regulation. Tony Sanders, a spokesman for that agency, has talked to groups at three prisons. "You have people who are going for diplomas or degrees in areas where they might need a license when they get out. And it's tough, because every single law our agency administers says that we can deny a person a license if they have a criminal conviction. But that's where [ex-cons] actually learned their trade — in prison."

Often, however, the statutory barrier is open to discretion. In the case of the cosmetology fields, says Sanders, "you usually don't see a problem with people getting out of prison, applying for a license and not being issued a license. Of course, it's all going to depend on what their conviction was for."

There is less regulatory leeway in other areas. Those convicted for any one of a long list of crimes cannot become daycare providers for instance. And criminal background checks often are required in the health care fields. Registered nurses and licensed practical nurses must be fingerprinted. But even here, there's help. The Safer Foundation has taken clients through the waiver process in the Department of Public Health so they can become certified nurses' aides.

Certainly, the difficulty of getting a professional license is not the greatest barrier to ex-offender employment. Festen and Fischer find drug problems, homelessness and the prison record itself often are higher hurdles. And even the ex-convicts they interviewed recognize employers' wariness. "You've got to expect they'll be worried about violence," said one.

But Matthews is committed to working toward a standard procedure for ensuring that ex-offenders can get licensed. "We're very concerned about folks having as many options as possible — those who are sincere about putting their lives back on track," she says.

Rodd Whelpley

Photograph by Joseph Andrew Carrier



Mona Colburn

IT'S A GOVERNMENT JOB Paleontologist uses artistic talents to tell Illinois' story

Mona Colburn lives in the past.

As a paleontologist at the Illinois State Museum, she spends most of her time studying the bones of long-extinct fauna. This summer, for example, she was busy casting the fossilized bones of a giant ground sloth, *Megalonyx jeffersonii*, for the renovation of the museum's natural history display in Springfield.

It's a massive job. This sloth would have been the size of a Volkswagen Beetle.

Colburn begins her projects by creating a hollow mold of fossilized bones, which can be tricky if some of the skeleton is missing. Next, she makes a dark brown fiberglass casting. Then, because fossils acquire the coloration of the mineral deposits they contain, she applies several coats of semi-transparent paint to give the castings a realistic hue and sheen.

Colburn says the challenge is to maintain an artistic continuity. The giant sloth, for instance, contains more than 200 bones. After the skeleton is finished, Colburn works with Jeff Saunders, the museum's director of geology and paleontology, and Paul Countryman, head of exhibits, to assemble the cast skeleton on a steel framework.

Making casts of fossils is an art in itself, but knowing the story the bones tell is another facet of Colburn's interdisciplinary approach as an artist and a scientist.

Colburn's projects are subsidized with grants and other contributions. Her work on the giant ground sloth was supported by the Illinois State Museum Society's 1877 Club.

The new natural history display is scheduled to debut at the end of the year.

Joseph Andrew Carrier

Amtrak's tab could be headed this way

The states would end up sharing more of Amtrak's costs under one plan advanced by the White House.

Congress has until October, the beginning of the federal fiscal year, to come up with a plan for funding the nation's floundering passenger rail system. But over the summer, President George W. Bush's administration recommended that the states take on more of the planning and funding. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta also suggested policymakers should consider high-speed rail separately.

Both proposals could have serious implications for Illinois, which already shells out more than \$10 million a year to subsidize three in-state routes. State officials also hope to operate Amtrak trains at high speeds for part of the Chicago-St. Louis route by the end of this year. (See *Illinois Issues*, April, pages 18 and 23).

"Illinois has shown and continues to show its commitment to rail," says Mike

Monseur, a spokesman for the Illinois Department of Transportation. "Rail transport is vital to our economy, and there needs to be federal involvement."

Monseur says state transportation officials are still reviewing the president's proposal.

This much is certain: Amtrak is broke and so far nobody has been able to fix it. The rail service nearly ran out of money this summer, lending a new sense of urgency to questions about its future. But Bush and congressional leaders agreed to a temporary fix, narrowly averting the shutdown Amtrak officials threatened as its cash balance plunged toward zero. The plan gives Amtrak \$205 million to continue functioning until October, with a few concessions intended to help officials find ways to reduce costs.

But even the architects of the deal say it doesn't address the main sticking points that have mired talks on the future of the 31-year-old company.

Mineta and others in the Bush Administration continue to push for ways to move

Amtrak into the black without federal subsidies, a goal that has eluded the company since Congress established it.

Others in Congress are pushing for more support of the company. Illinois U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin and his Democratic allies amended next year's budget to include twice as much money for Amtrak as Bush originally recommended.

The president proposed setting aside \$521 million for Amtrak, though the company maintains it needs \$1.2 billion. Senate Democrats signed on to the amount Amtrak requested.

Amtrak is already \$3 billion in debt and estimates it has a \$5.8 billion backlog in "needed" capital investment. The company hasn't been able to repair its railroad cars, meaning that when a Chicago-Washington train derailed in Maryland in July, Amtrak didn't have any cars to replace it.

Durbin spokesman Joe Shoemaker warns that if Amtrak's funding is cut from the Democrat-proposed level, "we could be in this mess again next year."

Daniel C. Vock

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From the headlines

The New York Times reported Illinois is among states that are improperly spending federal dollars intended for the Children's Health Insurance Program on childless adults. In an August 8 story, Robert Pear wrote that a General Accounting Office report charged President George W. Bush's administration with authorizing the practice in violation of congressional intent. Pear quoted health care experts who said states were "stretching the children's health program beyond its original purpose because they were short of money." The report cited Illinois' SeniorCare initiative (see *Illinois Issues*, May, page 20).

Carnegie library to be saved for other uses

The Freeport Public Library is the oldest Carnegie library still serving patrons in Illinois. On September 4, it marks 100 years. Ironically, that benchmark comes two weeks after ground was broken for a new library.

Many in the community appreciate the building's historical significance, says library director Frank Novak. However, he says, when a building no longer serves its purpose and can't be made functional, new space is necessary. A major obstacle is compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. The library has no elevator and only limited wheelchair accessibility.

The city of Freeport, a town of 30,000 in Stephenson County in northwest Illinois, owns the building and will determine its future use. Mayor Jim Gitz says there are several possibilities, but all of them center around community use.

Freeport's library dates to 1874 when a group, including a nephew of Charles Dickens, pooled money and bought a few books, then began lending them to others. The town took over 15 years later, and officials wrote to Andrew Carnegie in 1901 when they needed more space. Carnegie gave the city \$30,000.

In all, 105 Illinois libraries received grants from Carnegie. Unlike many of those, including the one in Springfield, the library building in Freeport will not be demolished, says Gitz.

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Smokers will pay 98 cents in state taxes on each pack of cigarettes, up from 58 cents, while riverboats will pay higher taxes on their profits. The state's casino take was boosted across the board, but the biggest hike, 35 percent to 50 percent, will be levied on the most lucrative boats. These taxes are expected to help generate some \$675 million.


 **Pledge of Allegiance**
Public high school students must recite the pledge. Previously, only grade school students had to do so.

 **Teacher certification**
Prospective teachers must pass the basic skills test required for teacher certification before entering a teacher preparation program.


 **Animal cruelty**
Illinoisans can't give rabbits or birds as prizes, create or sell depictions of animal cruelty, or hurt a police dog. Injuring a police animal will be punishable by one to three years in prison.


 **Juvenile crime**
Some juveniles charged with certain drug crimes may be moved back to juvenile court. Circuit courts will be encouraged to create drug courts, with alternative punishment for juveniles.

 **Hate crimes**
A new crime of conspiracy against civil rights will be punishable by one to three years in prison. And insurance companies can't cancel a policy because the policyholder makes multiple hate crime-related claims.


 **Heroin**
People in possession of heroin need only 1 gram, rather than 10 grams,

to be charged with a Class 1 felony punishable by four to 15 years in prison.

 **Illegal drivers**
The state can seize a vehicle from somebody convicted of driving on a suspended or revoked license.

 **Underage smoking**
Every driver's license or state identification card must display the date the cardholder turns 18.

VETOED

 **Truth-in-sentencing**
The governor disagreed with a measure requiring people convicted of cannabis trafficking or controlled substance trafficking to serve 85 percent of the sentence. Among other reasons, the governor said incarcerating these offenders for additional time would prove too expensive.

Aaron Chambers

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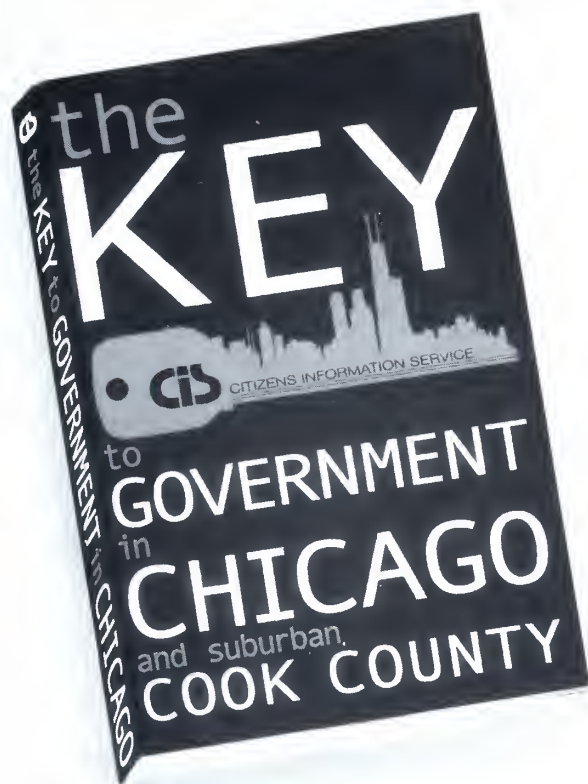
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Against history

This election will determine whether Republicans keep control of the U.S. House, and whether Speaker J. Dennis Hastert will get a third term. The past isn't promising

by Lynn Sweet

Photographs by Lauren Shay

La Colline is a restaurant a few blocks from the Capitol, a popular place for political fundraisers. On one July morning, about 40 lobbyists show up to breakfast with U.S. House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert and write checks to his leadership fund.

Hastert arrives a few minutes after 8 a.m. with a security detail and Mike Stokke, his chief political deputy, who is a former Illinois GOP state central committeeman. As the lobbyists dine on eggs Benedict, Hastert, given to massive understatement, admits it's been an "interesting time" since he became speaker almost four years ago.

He serves up a story about how he has to get up as early as 5:15 on the mornings he has a 7 a.m. White House meeting with President George W. Bush. The four congressional leaders started having weekly breakfasts with the president after the September 11 terrorist attacks. Hastert says he grabbed a suit one morning and didn't realize until he was dressed that he had put on his tuxedo. It's a benign self-deprecating yarn. Then Hastert moves on to more serious matters: herding cats in the House.

"With a five-vote margin, all you have to do is make four or five people unhappy and you can't get anything done," the Republican leader says. "The hard part of this job is just to govern, with a small g."

Now Hastert faces another challenge. The November election will determine whether his party will continue to control the House, and whether Hastert,

60, will get a third term as speaker. But the former Yorkville history teacher is running against history.

He's doing everything he can — raising millions for GOP House candidates at hundreds of events such as the La Colline breakfast — to avoid a repeat of this fact: The party out of power in the White House has picked up seats in every president's first midterm election except 1934. The Republicans control the House by a narrow margin, so voters in just a few districts could topple Hastert and clear the way for House Democratic leader Richard Gephardt of Missouri to become speaker.

Hastert can't rest on star power. He's big and beefy — think John Goodman or John Madden — but most people couldn't pick Hastert, who is third in succession to the White House — out of a lineup. "I've seen polling," says GOP pollster Frank Luntz. "He is not well-known. He has never been well-known, and maybe that is why people trust him. He is content to play behind the scenes."

"This is a fickle business," says Hastert a few weeks after the fundraising breakfast. "The most important issue in this business is getting your message out back home." The November outcome "really depends on what happens with the economy and a lot of things, and really what people are thinking two weeks before the election. I think we have a good message to talk about."

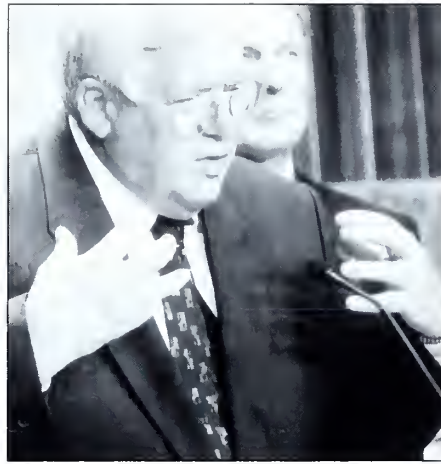
Though there are 435 members in the House and all the seats are up, only about 40 districts are in play for the

2002 elections. (The marquee race in Illinois pits two incumbents against each other: Republican John Shimkus of Collinsville and Democrat David Phelps of Eldorado). Hastert talks through the vulnerable list fluidly. His August campaign fundraising calendar put him on the road for three weeks in more than 20 critical districts in 12 states, all west of the Mississippi.

Key to control of the House in 2002 is money, and Hastert is an energetic fundraiser. His political operation works in concert with the White House political office and the GOP campaign committees. Between January and July, Hastert has stumped in 28 districts in 24 states, raising \$7 million for GOP candidates. In 2001, Hastert headlined 227 events in 26 states, covering 49 districts. During the 1999-2000 cycle — Hastert's first term as speaker — he campaigned for 126 House candidates in 36 states, making, all told, 655 events and collecting about \$20 million.

"I think that is my responsibility, my political responsibility, to help members to get elected, to find good candidates and to support those candidates," says Hastert. "Other speakers in other parliaments don't take a political position. But this is a political position, so I have a dual responsibility."

Hastert's spacious office in the Capitol is part of a suite of grand, high-ceiling rooms. When the flashy Newt Gingrich was speaker, the conference room in the complex was dubbed the "Dinosaur Room" because that's where Gingrich mounted the skull of a *Tyrannosaurus*



rex. Under Hastert's reign, the place has been renamed the "Lincoln Room," an apt tribute from an Illinois speaker.

Hastert's office is full of memorabilia, from model cars — an auto buff, he owns nine antique cars, including a pickup truck and two fire engines — to African art, with a scepter from Kenya. There is a statue of a fox on the prowl in front of the fireplace, a connection to Hastert's home overlooking the Fox River.

On a coffee table is a picture book of Luxembourg, where Hastert's grandfather was born, and another book featuring photos of Illinois landscapes. In a corner, there is a polyester baseball shirt — size XXL — that says "Coach Hastert," signed by GOP House members. Hastert is a former wrestling coach who tries to arrange his schedule so he can attend the annual NCAA wrestling tournament. His small desk is in front of a window looking out over the National Mall and the Washington Monument.

John Dennis Hastert — everyone calls him Denny — grew up in Oswego, the eldest of three sons of Naomi and Jack. Hastert's dad operated a feed store before he started running restaurants.

Hastert attended North Central College in Naperville, which is affiliated with the United Methodist Church, and transferred to the Christian evangelical Wheaton

College, where he graduated in 1964.

He taught history and government at Yorkville High School and along the way picked up a master's degree at Northern Illinois University. He married Jean, now a retired elementary school gym teacher, in 1973.

He's managed to clear a path for his sons in Washington, too.

Joshua, 27, the oldest, in 1999 ran a record label and record store in DeKalb known locally as Seven Dead Arson, a name inspired by a news headline. After Hastert became speaker, Joshua moved to Washington and became a lobbyist, one of the rare ones who work the Capitol with a pierced ear. This summer, Joshua Hastert was named a principal member of the lobbying firm Federal Legislative Associates.

Joshua Hastert says his father has not changed much as speaker. He says key to his father's style is "making sure everyone's side is heard."

His younger brother Ethan, 24, just wrapped up a stint as an aide to Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff and is now at Northwestern University's law school.

Cheney and Hastert know each other from Cheney's House days, and the two went fly fishing last year in Wyoming. Hastert, says Cheney in an e-mail, is "only a mediocre fly fisherman." Hastert agrees. "Fly fishing takes a lot of skill and a lot of time and a lot of patience. In bass fishing, you just lay the bait out there and wait

for a big old fish to hit it." This is Hastert's approach to cutting a deal to pass a bill, to get something done.

"The last two years would've been far more difficult and much less productive had it not been for the speaker of the House," says Cheney.

Hastert enjoys a solid relationship with Bush. "I think he trusts me when I give advice." The president teased him about his weight when the four congressional leaders met after July 4. The needling seems to get to Hastert. Bush asked Hastert if he was in some holiday parades. The trim Bush, winking at the others, asked, "Did you walk?"

"He is always giving me a jab about that," Hastert says. "I don't say anything."

Hastert is a diabetic who is supposed to watch his diet. He injects himself daily with insulin in the thigh.

The road to Washington, D.C., started in Springfield for Hastert, with his 1980 election to the Illinois General Assembly. After three terms, he won a congressional seat in 1986. He managed Tom DeLay's campaign for House Whip in 1994 and became the Texas Republican's chief deputy.

The speaker's job was thrust upon Hastert on December 19, 1998, on a frantic Saturday when House members came to work thinking the main item on their agenda was the impeachment of President Bill Clinton.

The flamboyant and controversial

Gingrich, then House speaker, was quitting, and his designated replacement, Bob Livingston, sent shockwaves through the chamber when he announced his resignation without mentioning the affair that forced his hand.

DeLay, a combative personality with a long list of detractors, decided not to run for speaker, a role Hastert would have supported. With DeLay's backing, and after a six-hour blitz, Hastert, to the outside world an obscure lawmaker but in reality a consummate insider, lined up the votes to become speaker. He was scandal-free, a conservative who could build a bridge to the GOP moderates — and a coach. He was just what the frazzled and demoralized Republican team needed.

"He's been effective from Day One," says GOP lobbyist Haley Barbour, a former Republican National Committee chairman. "He's done well. He's a perfect guy for the time."

Hastert's loyalty to DeLay, and the circumstances surrounding his selection, gave rise to the notion, promoted by Democrats, that Hastert is DeLay's puppet. Hastert is willing to share power — to a degree — if it suits him. Hastert established himself in his own right after he led the House Republicans to victory in the 2000 elections.

What is true is that Democrats demonize DeLay and lay off the congenial speaker. Does DeLay drag Hastert to the right? The conservative Hastert generally does not travel down any path he does not wish to take. "If you look at my record in the Illinois General Assembly, you look at my record in Congress, I have been pretty conservative. I can't say I have been far to the right, but I have been right of center pretty much consistently. And you know, I can't say that Tom takes me to the right," says Hastert. "My record speaks for itself." Of their good cop-bad cop routine he says, "I think our two styles complement each other."

His less-noted accomplishment is his relationship with the GOP moderates; they rarely use the leverage they have to derail the agenda set down by the White House and Hastert.

Hastert is unique in Washington. He is able to maintain his powerbase without the media. He runs from the camera. He shuns the weekend talk shows. Through July of this year, he's been on three weekend shows. In 2001, he made only seven appearances with five of the bookings coming in the weeks following September 11. His occasional Thursday morning "pen and pads" with the congressional press corps rarely yields a headline.

"He's good at saying nothing when he does not want to say anything," says John Feehery, Hastert's press secretary. "He is the anti-Newt when



U.S. House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert

it comes to that." In a town that is media obsessed, Hastert is not consumed with the press. Feehery prepares a one-page news summary for Hastert each morning. While Gephardt cruises the Internet for stories, Hastert never logs on.

The relationship between Hastert and Gephardt is intriguing.

Hastert's all-time low on the job came over the selection of a new House chaplain, "when Gephardt tried to use the chaplain as a wedge issue," Stokke says. "It was hideous."

Hastert set up a search committee, a

process that ended up exploding in his face. Three clerics were recommended by the panel. When the Catholic was not selected, rumbles of anti-Catholic bias started. Hastert was horrified. He ended up naming a Chicago priest, Father Daniel Coughlin.

The wounded Hastert then said from the floor, "I can only conclude that those who accuse me of anti-Catholic bigotry either don't know me or are maliciously seeking political advantage by making these accusations." Gephardt's staff says he did nothing wrong. But the two men did not speak for a long time — until they found themselves together in a bunker on September 11, rushed to a hiding place after the Pentagon was attacked.

Gephardt is "not a bad person," Hastert says, "but my frustration is you can never really sit down and talk to him and put something together. It is always wait and wait and wait and wait."

Hastert's inner circle consists of a small, trusted group of aides, mostly all white and all male. Stokke, his political adviser, and Scott Palmer, his chief of staff, have worked with Hastert for years. They know Illinois politics as well as the national scene. While in Washington, the three room together in a townhouse Hastert owns, where none of them has cooked a meal since 1986. Says Hastert, "I made tea once." His sons also have bunked at the townhouse.

Over at La Colline, Hastert ticks off legislative accomplishments that will give members something to sell in November. The House passed a plan to help seniors pay for prescription drugs and beefed up its corporate accountability measure in the wake of more company scandals.

But the nation is at war, terrorism is a threat and, if the stock market is tanking in November, Republican prospects will dim.

Hastert is optimistic as he goes through each House race while the lobbyists listen. Says the speaker, "I am constantly amazed, in this climate, that we are in pretty good shape." □

Lynn Sweet is the Chicago Sun-Times Washington bureau chief.

National party leaders focus on the Shimkus-Phelps race for Congress

John Shimkus and David Phelps work together on Capitol Hill. As former schoolteachers, these two downstate congressmen have views in common. They even share conservative positions on such social issues as abortion and gun control.

But don't expect them to applaud each other, at least not during this election cycle. Only one of them will return to Congress next year.

The state's new congressional map, reapportioned after the 2000 federal census, means Shimkus, a Republican, and Phelps, a Democrat, will face each other this fall. And, come November, one of them will be out of office.

But there's much more on the line than one man losing his job after Election Day. At stake is control of the U.S. House, where the GOP now has, at best, a slim five- or six-seat majority. That means there are a handful of races crucial to both parties — only four in which an incumbent Republican is facing an incumbent Democrat — and one of them is the new 19th District in southern Illinois.

"From a larger perspective, it's important for John Shimkus to return to Washington as part of a Republican majority," says John McGovern, a spokesman for Republican House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert.

With so much on the line, this race is drawing national interest. In April, Vice President Dick Cheney visited Collinsville to host a fundraiser for Shimkus, helping the congressman raise some \$200,000.

Phelps, too, is counting on national support — from Democratic House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt — in this state's most hotly contested congressional race. A spokeswoman for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee says the group "will do what it takes" to help Phelps win in November.

And while corporate giants such as Exelon Corp. are backing Shimkus, organized labor is behind Phelps. The Illinois AFL-CIO, which has an estimated 50,000 members in the new

19th, is working to tip the election in the Democrat's favor.

"This is a race where we can fill the seat with a pro-worker candidate," says Bill Looby, the federation's political director. The group says Phelps votes with labor 94 percent of the time, while Shimkus does so 19 percent of the time.

The race in Illinois' 19th District also will determine the partisan balance within this state's congressional delegation. Illinois lost one congressional seat because population in this state didn't grow as fast as populations in other states. Currently, the delegation is an even split between the two major parties: 10 Republicans and 10 Democrats.

For voters, of course, there's more than partisanship at stake. The party in control of Congress helps sway the national agenda. If Democrats retain control of the U.S. Senate and gain control of the House, as they hope to do, that would cramp President George W. Bush's attempts to direct federal policy. The Democrats, for example, have not been as friendly as Republicans to the president's efforts to enhance the nation's anti-terrorism infrastructure. GOP members prefer an aggressive, no-nonsense approach to dealing with terrorist threats, while Democrats are more likely to weigh civil liberties.

Phelps decided to take on Shimkus after the delegation picked the Democrat as the sacrificial lamb. When the two parties devised the map, they created districts that favored incumbents on both sides of the aisle — except for Phelps. His district, which for the last decade covered rural counties in central and southern Illinois, was eliminated. The new map put his Eldorado home at the end of a narrow stretch of the 15th District, the bulk of which surrounds Champaign. The 15th is represented by Timothy Johnson, an Urbana Republican.

The new map drew sharp reaction from political leaders in southern Illinois, primarily because the population base of each of the new

districts is not in their region of the state. Phelps and some constituents unsuccessfully challenged it in court. Then Phelps decided his best shot was to take on Shimkus, who represents the blue-collar Metro East area, counties to the northwest along the Mississippi River and a few rural counties in southern Illinois.

The new 19th sweeps outward from Metro East and down to the Kentucky border, encompassing neighborhoods on Springfield's south side. Rural areas around Effingham, Mount Vernon and Jerseyville were combined with such urban centers as Collinsville and the capital city.

The district, now favoring Shimkus' re-election, leans Republican and encompasses about two-thirds of the territory Shimkus represents. Phelps currently represents about 40 percent of the new 19th.

Most other members of the delegation face only token opposition, but there are some interesting contests.

One, in the north suburban 10th District, could be competitive but has not drawn nearly as much interest as the race between Shimkus and Phelps.

Mark Kirk, a first-term Highland Park Republican, faces a challenge from Glencoe Democrat Henry "Hank" Perritt Jr., on leave as dean of the Chicago-Kent College of Law. Before winning a seat in Congress, Kirk was chief of staff to U.S. Rep. John Porter, a popular GOP powerhouse who represented the 10th for 10 terms before retiring. In 2000, Kirk was elected to fill Porter's seat.

As with the 19th in the south, the new 10th favors the incumbent Republican. It covers lakefront towns from Waukegan south to Wilmette, then heads west to Arlington Heights and north to Gurnee. Kirk, whose campaign had \$945,964 at the end of June, generally is favored to win in this district over Perritt, whose campaign had \$125,553.

State Sen. Terry Link of Vernon Hills, who is Lake County Democratic chairman, is more optimistic than most



Republican John Shimkus, first elected to Congress in 1996, lives in Collinsville.

observers in his belief that Perritt can best Kirk. "Kirk has done a tremendous job on [public relations]. If there's a garage sale or a new baby born, somehow his name is tied to it," he says. "The perception is that the race is all over. But Dean Perritt is offering so much more in his experience and knowledge."

Link also believes the district's partisan balance is close enough that the district's voters could send a Democrat to Washington.

Another race to watch in the Chicago region is in the 5th District. Democrat Rahm Emanuel, an aide to former President Bill Clinton, beat former state Rep. Nancy Kaszak in the primary run for this seat. But Emanuel is a high-profile character, and some sparks are already flying in this race, among them the news that Emanuel used nonunion labor to remodel his house.

He's expected to win the general election in this Democrat-leaning district that stretches from Chicago's posh North Side neighborhoods to near-west suburbs, including Northlake and Schiller Park. He faces Chicago Republican Mark Augusti, an investment executive, and Libertarian Frank Gonzalez in November.

Farther downstate, incumbent Rep. Lane Evans, a Democrat, is presumed safe in the new 17th District that runs east of the Mississippi from Moline all the way south to Calhoun County just above the Metro East area. That district, one of the most awkwardly shaped of the 19 new districts, includes Galesburg, Quincy and Carlinville.

Evans has beaten challenges from Mark Baker, a television anchor, in the last three general elections. This time around, the Illinois congressional delegation gave Evans some relief with a new 17th that leans more Democratic. As a result, Evans has the edge over Peter Calderone, a Galesburg Republican and community activist.

In the 15th, Johnson, the Republican

incumbent, is expected to win in a walkaway against Democrat Joshua Hartke and Green Party candidate Carl Estabrook.

The numbers demonstrate strong support for Johnson: The incumbent had \$169,966 in his campaign fund at the end of June, while Estabrook reported \$1,055 and Hartke had collected too few dollars to file a report.

The match-up between Shimkus and Phelps, meanwhile, promises to be expensive and hard-fought. National figures are taking an interest, and both candidates are hard-working and respected in the region. But Shimkus clearly has the edge in fundraising. He had \$1,084,583 on hand at the end of June, while Phelps had \$505,069.

National parties and special interests are paying attention: Shimkus took 62 percent of his money from political action committees, including \$10,000 from House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert's Keep Our Majority PAC and \$12,000 from Exelon Corp., according to the Washington-based Center for Responsive Politics. Phelps took 66 percent of his money from PACs, including \$10,000 from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and \$10,000 from the Association of Trial Lawyers of America.

While the candidates share some views, there are distinct differences. Shimkus, who was elected to Congress in 1996, sports a solidly pro-business record, including his recent vote for the so-called "fast-track" measure that strengthens the president's hand in negotiating trade agreements. He is a former Madison County treasurer, a post he won in a heavily Democratic area.

Phelps, a second-term congressman known throughout rural Illinois as a gospel performer, served in the Illinois House before going to Washington. There, he is a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, a group of fiscally conservative Democrats.

Back home, he sings a blue-collar populist tune. "These farmers and hard-working people of southern Illinois will not have any representation at all if they go with this guy [Shimkus], who is mostly urban oriented," says Phelps



Democrat David Phelps, running for his third term in Congress, lives in Eldorado.

spokesman David Woodruff.

Indeed, in economically depressed southern Illinois, jobs and economic development are among the top issues of concern to voters. And Phelps says he's the only candidate sensitive to the needs of farmers and small-business owners in rural Illinois, who compose the bulk of the new district. Shimkus, who lives in the fast-growing region across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, is working to counter any image that he's preoccupied with urban concerns.

Yet Phelps is touting his Democratic agenda in Shimkus' back yard: Phelps established his campaign headquarters in Madison County's Edwardsville in an effort to build name recognition in the district's population center.

As for his own rural-friendly credentials, Shimkus argues he's the one looking out for farmers and small-business owners. The Shimkus camp criticizes Phelps for voting against fast-track trade authority and against the GOP economic stimulus package that passed last year. Shimkus voted for both measures.

"That's a most important issue to farmers — being able to sell their products — and he didn't vote with them," says Shimkus spokesman Steve Tomaszewski.

Phelps argues the economic stimulus package, which includes tax breaks for businesses, overwhelmingly benefits the wealthy. With regard to trade authority, his spokesman fires back: "We're concerned about keeping the jobs in southern Illinois and not farming those out around the rest of the world."

For voters in southern Illinois, polls throughout the state and power brokers in the nation's capital, this is a race to watch. The 19th will send either the Republican or the Democrat — not both — back to Congress next year.

Aaron Chambers

Snoozeville?

Outsiders consider this state's U.S. Senate race dull,
but Illinois voters will face distinctly different candidates

by Kurt Erickson

National Republican leaders aren't counting Illinois voters in any of their strategies for regaining a majority in the U.S. Senate. Adding insult to injury, perhaps, one congressional tracking service ranks this state's race just five positions above "Snoozeville."

Of course, such national calculations rest on some pretty straightforward concerns. Consider the political math. The Republicans need to take just one U.S. Senate seat from the Democrats. And, at this point, Illinois looks like a long shot.

At the tail end of his first term, U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin enjoys a commanding lead in state and national polls and an eye-popping advantage in fundraising over his Republican opponent, state Rep. Jim Durkin, a former assistant prosecutor from Westchester.

So, early odds are that the national GOP will cede Illinois in favor of concentrating its financial largesse on at least 14 more favorable match-ups, including the nearby states of Iowa, Minnesota and Missouri, where Democratic incumbent Jean Carnahan is in a tough race against former U.S. Rep. Jim Talent in what amounts to a special election. Carnahan was appointed to the seat after her husband, Mel Carnahan, died in a plane crash three weeks before the 2000 election. The race is considered a toss-up because Carnahan has never run a statewide campaign, while Talent ran for governor in 2000 but lost by only 23,000 votes. President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney have been helping Talent raise money. And the national media has trained its attentions on the Show Me state.

Across the Mississippi River, where there has been little drama, Illinois is barely getting a second glance. "It's off the charts for everyone here in Washington," says political analyst Thomas Mann, a senior fellow at the Washington, D.C.-based Brookings Institution.

There are a couple of good reasons. Durbin doesn't enter the race with the kind of negatives opposition researchers love to get their hooks into. And, two years ago, the Illinois voter base for President Bush was a meager 41 percent.

"Nobody is really putting the race in the competitive category," agrees analyst Tari Renner, chairman of the political science department at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington.

That's not to say the race won't be lively for Illinoisans. And that's not to say it won't be important.

These two candidates offer distinct ideologies — with Durbin leaning to the left of center and Durkin leaning to the right — and different perspectives on such issues as abortion and prescription drug coverage.

Further, Illinois voters will have a choice beyond the two main parties. Libertarian Party candidate, Steven Burgauer of Peoria, a former stockbroker turned science fiction writer, is running, too. Burgauer, who teaches at Eureka College, is among a slate of Libertarians who won the right to be on the ballot thanks to a late July ruling by the Illinois State Board of Elections. He would cut income taxes up to 20 percent, with the first \$25,000 in earnings going tax-free. And he wants to phase out Social Security taxes. Among his eight

published books are *Naked Came the Farmer*, which he describes as a zany murder mystery.

There's no mystery about who is the most seasoned campaigner of the trio. Durbin has served in Washington, D.C., for nearly 20 years. Before that, the East St. Louis native made an unsuccessful bid for Illinois lieutenant governor and served as a staffer in the legislature. He now resides in Springfield.

He has consistently received high ratings from labor groups and low ratings from pro-business organizations, based on his votes in Congress. Though his positions favoring abortion rights and gun control often tag him with a "liberal" label, he also supports the death penalty and broke ranks to vote for welfare reform.

"I think my record reflects a state that is fairly moderate," he says.

In 1996, Durbin defeated Republican conservative state Rep. Al Salvi, 56 percent to 41 percent, to succeed his mentor, Democratic U.S. Sen. Paul Simon, a liberal's liberal. Durbin parlayed his 14 years in the U.S. House into a seat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, one of the key committees that allocates money for home-state construction projects.

His re-election may have been sealed last fall when Republicans failed to coax a candidate with ready-made name recognition into the race — say, former Gov. Jim Edgar or Lt. Gov. Corinne Wood.

Durbin appears to enter the race with another advantage. While he coasted through the primary season, Durkin spent last winter battling it out with two



Democratic U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin (left) attends a Springfield barbecue held in his honor. At the tail end of his first term, Durbin enjoys a commanding lead in state and national polls and an eye-popping advantage in fundraising.

well-financed opponents: tax attorney John Cox and Aurora dairyman Jim Oberweis.

"I ran up against tremendous odds," Durkin says of his primary victory. "I was outspent. I was told I was not going to win." But, he adds, "I stuck to my message. I talked about my record. When I say that I'm going to do something in Washington, I can back it up because I have a record that shows I'm a person who stands by his word."

Durkin was born in Chicago and raised in suburban Westchester, where he still resides. He and his seven brothers graduated from Fenwick High School in Oak Park. He graduated from Illinois State University with a degree in criminal justice and received his law degree from John Marshall Law School in Chicago. After serving one year as an assistant state attorney general in the felony trials division, he spent another four as an assistant state's attorney in Cook County. In 1995, Durkin was appointed to a vacancy in the Illinois House, representing the 44th District.

While his GOP primary opponents ran as Ronald Reagan conservatives, Durkin touted his pedigree as a law-and-order Republican. In Springfield, he was at the forefront of a legislative push to reform Illinois' court system

after Gov. George Ryan declared a moratorium on the death penalty.

Two years ago, after chairing a special committee, Durkin unsuccessfully pushed proposals to rein in misconduct by prosecutors. Among them was a plan to require new trials in cases where prosecutors intentionally withheld evidence that might have helped the defendant. The plan also would have required prosecutors to prove that testimony from jailhouse informants was reliable. And it would have created a special jury instruction to advise jurors to treat testimony from informants with caution.

Durkin favors capital punishment, but he argues if changes aren't made, the death penalty may wind up being banned in this state.

At the same time, Durkin's roots as a former assistant prosecutor in Cook County are evident in his stance on gun control. Unlike Durbin's 1996 opponent, Al Salvi, Durkin is unlikely to make gun rights a cornerstone of his campaign. For favoring stiffer laws on gun ownership, he earned a "D" from the Illinois State Rifle Association.

In fact, Durkin and Durbin both have received perfect scores from such gun control groups as Illinois Citizens for Handgun Control and the Coalition to

Stop Gun Violence.

On the federal level, Durkin supports a national missile defense system, a lower estate tax and a constitutional amendment banning abortion except in cases of rape, incest or to save the life of the woman.

Through the summer months, he has tried to nudge poll numbers in his direction by criticizing Durbin's positions on the storage of nuclear waste in Nevada, much of which would travel through this state, and the appointment of Miriam Miquelon as the new U.S. attorney in southern Illinois.

As if answering Durkin directly, Durbin soon agreed to the appointment of Miquelon, who was the lead prosecutor in a high-profile corruption case that nabbed allies of powerful Metro East Democrats. Friends of U.S. Rep. Jerry Costello of Belleville were rankled when he was named an "unindicted co-conspirator" in the case. Durbin's decision to lift the brick on her appointment led to her being confirmed by the U.S. Senate in July.

Durbin also reversed himself to vote in favor of opening Yucca Mountain in Nevada to nuclear waste shipments—a move Durkin argues shows Durbin holding his finger to the political winds.

"It's a lack of leadership," he says.



Republican state Rep. Jim Durkin hits the DuPage County Fair. He's convinced he can draw big money to his race for the U.S. Senate. He aligned himself with Republican U.S. Sen. John McCain of Arizona, who has headlined fundraising events for Durkin.

"Dick Durbin is one of the greatest leaders in hindsight."

For his part, Durbin says his support for Miquelon came only after he took the time to review a lengthy, politically charged file on her background, which he says was the thickest he'd ever seen. He decided to vote for Yucca Mountain, he says, because the language of the legislation was more acceptable than in two previous drafts.

"When a senator is running for re-election, the senator's record is the issue," says Durbin. "My opponent has to convince people I have not done a good job."

Nevertheless, few political observers believe issues will be at the center of this race. "I don't think that's what will help you predict the outcome of the election," says analyst Frank Mackaman, director of the Dirksen Congressional Center in Pekin. "I think more important are the power of incumbency, the ability to raise money, the partisan control of the U.S. Senate and how this race plays into that."

"And," Mackaman adds, "what kind of name confusion occurs." Indeed, the similarity between the names Durkin and Durbin has become fodder for political columnists across the state, adding a touch of levity to a contest

many believe could be a bloodbath.

"Durkin is benefiting from some of the name confusion in the polls in the short run. Clearly, there aren't that many people on the street who even know who he is," says Wesleyan's Renner.

Even some Republicans profess to be unsure. "I don't know much about Durkin and I'm a political junkie," says James Nowlan, who is associated with the University of Illinois' Institute of Government and Public Affairs. "I voted for him because Jim Edgar endorsed him. That was two days before the election."

Indeed, voters may be left to spend the next two months simply attempting to puzzle out the candidates' names in this race. Even Durbin anticipates taking some time to educate voters about the difference. "We're going to try to turn this not only into a political campaign but a spelling bee," says Durbin. That brought a chuckle from Durkin: "For a man who served 14 years in the U.S. House and five and a half years in the U.S. Senate, he's worried about name identity? I think it says it all right there."

Maybe. But the difference between these two candidates shows up on the campaign ledger books, too. While

Durbin racked up \$4.7 million through the end of June, Durkin started the stretch run with just over \$110,000 in his campaign account.

Durkin is nonetheless convinced he can bring in some big money. In mid-August, former Gov. Jim Thompson came on board as his campaign chairman. And Durkin also is looking beyond the state's borders. "Washington is going to come in and assist," he says during a midsummer visit to the state American Legion conference in Springfield. In fact, he's counting on help from a friend he made during the 2000 presidential election. Rather than back Bush, Durkin aligned himself with Republican U.S. Sen. John McCain of Arizona. McCain has returned the favor by headlining fundraising events for Durkin.

Yet, Mann, the analyst at the Brookings Institution, is unsure whether even McCain's popularity will be enough to swing momentum toward Durkin. "The state environment favors the Democratic Party and now, in recent weeks, it looks more likely that the national environment — with the shift in focus from terrorism to the economy — will also favor Democrats." □

Kurt Erickson is the Statehouse bureau chief for The Pantagraph of Bloomington.

Final word

The race in the Supreme Court's central Illinois district is quiet by recent standards. But the winner will get plenty of say on state laws

by Aaron Chambers

Rita Garman and Sue Myerscough talk about their qualifications for the job of Illinois Supreme Court justice. They offer just enough comment, with little elaboration, to answer questions. And they make only subtle efforts to distinguish themselves.

That's a world away from the increasingly familiar antics in races for the state's high court. In their efforts to join the court, candidates in recent years have gained attention by staking out positions on such highly charged topics as abortion and gun control.

But the race between Garman, a Republican, and Myerscough, a Democrat, resembles a more traditional judicial race, where the candidates steer their sound bites clear of such issues. And that's a relief for some in the legal system who contend that judges and candidates for the bench should not appear biased by discussing personal views.

As Chief Justice Moses Harrison II, who is retiring this month, puts it, "We don't want a bunch of people who commit themselves as to how they're going to vote on certain cases."

But the low-key nature of this race, with no substantive issues playing a prominent role, means the candidates must work harder to build name recognition. They also must rely, to a greater extent, on grass-roots organizations, money and party label.

The result will be no small matter to Illinoisans: The Supreme Court is the last stop for most cases involving questions of state law. These justices deal with every conceivable legal issue, from deciding whether acts of the legislature are constitutional, to whether Death Row inmates were fairly convicted, to interpreting

obscure procedural rules dear only to lawyers and judges.

Garman and Myerscough are fighting for one of the court's seven seats. More specifically, they each want to represent the court's 4th District, 30 counties in central Illinois that include Quincy, Springfield, Bloomington, Decatur and Champaign.

The winner will get a 10-year term and, if she chooses, can run unchallenged for retention to a second term. She'll have a vote on all of the court's cases. She'll help administer the state's court system. And she'll be responsible for filling, with the approval of the full court, judicial vacancies in her district.

"Being on the Supreme Court is obviously every lawyer's dream," Myerscough says. "We've got the best court system in the world, but it needs some work. And I've got the energy and desire to improve it."

Says Garman, who beat 4th District Appellate Justice Robert Steigmann in the primary, "It is the opportunity to mold the law in Illinois. It is the opportunity to rule on cases of first impression and to interpret statutes in a final and definitive way."

For now, both have their work cut out for them in getting the public's attention. The high court contests generally don't garner as much publicity as those for governor, or even the legislature. And judicial candidates are limited in what they can say on the campaign trail. In fact, judicial candidates often campaign on issues important to lawyers and judges but of no interest to the public — making judicial races even less interesting to most voters.

Myerscough, for example, wants the

Supreme Court to eliminate its Rule 23, which requires that certain appellate court opinions remain unpublished. As a result, those decisions cannot be cited as precedent in other cases. The rule was designed to limit the number of opinions that are published in law books, thereby preventing those volumes from becoming unwieldy.

Myerscough argues that, with legal research increasingly being conducted electronically rather than with law books, the rule no longer makes sense. Keeping the rule, she says, simply limits the number of cases available to lawyers and judges.

"It results in a hodgepodge of the legal system because there may be a case directly on point to the case that I just saw in court, and I won't know about it if it's in the 5th District, the 1st District, or whatever," she says. "I may not even know about it if it's in my court if I wasn't on the panel."

For her part, Garman says the court should revisit the rule, but there are certain cases that are appropriate for Rule 23, such as "a fact-specific analysis that really in most cases isn't necessary to the development of a cohesive and coherent body of law." Such a case before the appeals court might involve whether the state at trial proved the elements of burglary or another offense.

Not all the campaign issues are this dry, of course. The candidates do take some positions that are more likely to resonate with voters.

Garman, for example, pushed for the creation of a Supreme Court committee on child custody cases. The committee, formed last spring, is considering ways the courts can deal with these cases in a



Republican Rita Garman



Democrat Sue Myerscough

more efficient manner.

Myerscough, meanwhile, says the court system should take the lead in disbursement of child support funds. "I think the courts need to be involved in child support collection. We do the ordering of it, and I think we need to be involved in the disbursement of it. I think it should be overseen by the Supreme Court and by the local courts to make sure it's being handled correctly."

And, like nonjudicial candidates who speak in broad strokes about getting "tough on crime," judicial candidates do offer generic feel-good proposals.

Myerscough says the courts need to be "more people friendly." She says there are "common sense changes" that could be made in the court system, such as making the courts "more flexible." For example, she says, judges could stagger shifts to accommodate the public. She also says the courts should put more emphasis on monitoring and rehabilitating juvenile offenders.

Whatever means they use to attract votes, Supreme Court justices are likely to serve for a long time — the 4th District seat's previous occupant, Benjamin Miller, served from 1984 to 2001 — making this race a significant one.

In fact, this is the only contested race for the Supreme Court this election season. Justice Mary Ann McMorro, who will succeed Harrison as chief, is running for retention to a second term. But in retention races, candidates simply need "yes" votes from 60 percent of those voting on the question.

So the spotlight is on the race for the high court's 4th District seat, where both candidates have years

of experience on the bench at the trial and appellate levels.

To be sure, it can be difficult to distinguish these candidates.

Garman, a judge since 1974, was elevated from the Springfield-based 4th District Appellate Court to the Supreme Court last year when Miller retired; Myerscough, a judge since 1987, sits on that appellate court.

The Illinois State Bar Association rated both "highly recommended" for the Supreme Court. And lawyers polled in the 4th District recommended both for the seat: 95.69 percent of the respondents say Garman meets the "acceptable requirements" for the office, while 86.01 say Myerscough does.

Both are considered by lawyers to be moderate in their decision-making. It's tough to pin such a term on a justice, however, because appeals courts decisions are based on bodies of statute and case law, which are complex.

Garman lives in Danville, where she began her career in a legal-aid center. She also worked in private practice, and as a prosecutor in the Vermilion County state's attorney's office. She served the county as an associate judge, then as a circuit judge, before being assigned to the 4th District Appellate Court in 1995. She was elected to that court the following year.

Myerscough lives in Springfield, where she was in private practice until 1987, when she was appointed associate judge. She was elected circuit judge in 1990, going on to preside over the Sangamon County Circuit Court and the six-county 7th Judicial Circuit. She was elected to the Appellate Court in 1998.

But much will depend on how successful the candidates are at building name recognition, and whether their grass-roots organizations can get voters to the polls on November 5.

There are partisan considerations in this race, too. The outcome will hinge in large part on party affiliation and the strength of the respective party organizations. Each candidate can depend on a core group of voters to stick with their party's candidate. Beyond that, each campaign is courting independent voters.

The district does lean Republican. In the 2000 general election, George W. Bush won roughly 55 percent of the votes cast in the district, while Al Gore received about 45 percent. And this presumably would give Garman the edge.

But Myerscough proved she can best a Republican in this district. In 1998, she beat Sangamon County Circuit Judge Thomas Appleton to win her seat on the appeals court.

The wild card this year is negative publicity surrounding the state Republican Party. There's an ongoing investigation into bribery during Gov. George Ryan's tenure as secretary of state, and a new unrelated probe of House Minority Leader Lee Daniels' political use of his staff, which forced his resignation as state party chair. The entire GOP ticket could be hurt, including in the race for Supreme Court, if blocks of disgruntled Republican voters avoid the polls on Election Day.

Myerscough, though, downplays this consideration. "My own personal belief is the big politics don't have much effect on judicial races; we're down on the ballot," she says.

On the flip side, strong support for Attorney General Jim Ryan, the GOP candidate for governor, could mitigate any dissatisfaction voters have with the Republicans. "If the AG gets his message out — 'This is me, I'm a man of integrity' — people will believe him and I think we will do well," says Garman campaign manager Will Lovett. "If he's unable to get the message out, that's going to hurt us, being low on the ticket."

In any event, the two judicial candidates downplay party connections. They say voters probably will defer to a candidate's experience. "I personally think that a lot of people are smarter than a lot of politicians give them credit for," Garman says. "As we find with jurors, you give them a job to do and they make good choices."

Myerscough says, "I think the voters do try to educate themselves."

In fact, Supreme Court justices don't consistently decide cases along party lines. But beyond judicial decision-making, partisan labels and party politics clearly are at the core of this race.

The candidates, under Illinois law, must pick a party and run for election.

As such, they must rely on the work of party organizations to win.

The candidates also must raise money. Garman had \$11,869.12 on hand at the end of the reporting period, after spending \$331,162.68. Myerscough's campaign had \$152,120 available.

These figures are far lower than what has been raised and spent in recent races for the Illinois Supreme Court. It is no longer uncommon for a candidate to spend more than \$1 million on such a race. However, the bulk of that money typically is raised in the months just prior to the election.

The justice's relationship with a political party is reciprocal. Each Supreme Court justice must fill, with the approval of the full court, judicial vacancies in his or her district. And those slots typically are filled with members of the judge's political party.

Further, redistricting, the decennial process by which legislative boundaries are redrawn to reflect population shifts, inevitably goes before the state Supreme Court for consideration. And the justices, almost without exception, vote in favor of maps that benefit their own

party's candidates for the General Assembly, and against maps that don't.

Remap may not be a major consideration in this judicial race, though. Former Rock Island attorney Thomas Kilbride's victory two years ago over Sen. Carl Hawkinson, a Galesburg Republican who is now running for lieutenant governor, pushed the number of Democrats on the court from four to five.

Having five Democrats on the court and only two Republicans was perceived during last year's remap battle as an insurance policy for the Democrats in case one of the Democrats voted with the Republicans.

Kilbride's victory in 2000 was attributed in large part to help from House Speaker Michael Madigan. The Illinois Democratic Party, which the Chicago Democrat heads, spent \$687,989 on the race, including \$460,750 in cash and \$227,239 in in-kind contributions in the months just prior to that election.

State Sen. Vince Demuzio, a Carlinville Democrat and chair of the Myerscough campaign, says the connection between redistricting and races for the Supreme Court is clear.

U.S. Supreme Court ruling gives judges more leeway to speak out

Candidates for the Illinois bench have begun pushing the envelope in recent years on rules that limit their campaign rhetoric, speaking freely about their positions on such controversial topics as abortion and gun control.

They may now go even further.

The U.S. Supreme Court in June struck down a Minnesota rule prohibiting a judicial candidate from "announc[ing] his or her views on disputed legal or political issues," saying the clause violated the First Amendment freedom of speech.

The top federal court ruled candidates for any office, including a judgeship, cannot be barred from discussing issues. "We have never allowed the government to prohibit candidates from communicating relevant information to voters during an election," Justice Antonin Scalia wrote for the majority.

The decision also casts doubt on the validity of similar rules in other states, including this one, that govern what judicial candidates can say on the campaign trail. In Illinois, Supreme Court Rule 67 forbids judicial candidates from making statements that "commit or appear to commit" them with respect to cases that could come before the court.

This state's rule was designed to be narrower than Minnesota's rule — an Illinois candidate can announce

a position on an issue without necessarily committing to vote that way. Still, an Illinois judicial candidate charged in the future with violating Rule 67's campaign speech provision likely would challenge the rule as unconstitutional.

"Next time the Judicial Inquiry Board tries to enforce Rule 67, they'll get an objection based on the *Republican Party of Minnesota* case," says Steven Lubet, a professor at the Northwestern University School of Law and co-author of the definitive resource on judicial ethics. "And the outcome is anybody's guess."

Just what a judicial candidate would need to say to step over the bounds of Rule 67 is unclear. In recent years, candidates for the Illinois Supreme Court have been accused by opponents of making comments prohibited by the rule.

Justice Bob Thomas, who won a seat on the high court two years ago, disclosed during his race that he is against abortion. And Robert Steigmann, a 4th District Appellate Court justice who last spring lost a primary race for the state's highest court, has called for a law permitting Illinois citizens to carry concealed guns. But the Judicial Inquiry Board, a prosecutorial arm of the high court, did not charge either with ethics violations. *Aaron Chambers*

"I do believe that parties spend an inordinate amount of money on candidates for the Supreme Court because every 10 years you go through this perennial exercise of reapportionment and you need more Supreme Court justices to hopefully give you an advantage in any decision that they might make as a result of a lawsuit," he says. "Both parties play that game."

While remap has not overshadowed the race in the 4th District this year, Garman and some Republicans are painting her campaign as a race to keep the GOP adequately represented on the

court. Garman says voters are looking for "balance."

"It's a good thing to have different views represented, that everybody doesn't think alike," she says. "That way, when you come to a problem, you've had input from differing views and differing perspectives, and I think you come out with a stronger decision."

So how does being a Republican affect decision-making? "As a Republican, I'm a person that is probably more conservative in my approach to matters, that believes in less government, not more, minimal governmental interfer-

ence with individuals' livelihoods and lives, personal responsibility," she says. "Your life experiences tend to influence the way you approach problems."

Myerscough, on the other hand, tries during an interview to separate her partisan colors from her job. She says she doesn't sell herself as a "Democrat" on the stump. At most, she calls herself a "conservative Democrat."

She pauses for a moment, then adds, "Many of my supporters are Republican. My whole family is Republican." □

The heat is on

Control of the Illinois Senate is at stake, and the spotlight is on a handful of races

John Patterson
Photographs by Jon Randolph

It's late July and the summer sun is baking Chicagoland.

Rather than duck indoors and crank up the A/C, Kathleen Parker is walking door to door, talking to voters. Months remain before anyone goes to the polls, but this is a routine Parker, a Republican state senator from Northbrook, plans to keep to right up until the November 5 general election.

She's by no means alone. Her Democratic opponent Susan Garrett, a state representative from Lake Forest, is spending her summer walking the same political beat through the lakeshore communities of northern Cook County and into Lake County.

Working so hard so early seems like overkill. But there's far more at stake here than simply representing this section of suburban Chicago in the Illinois Senate.

This race, perhaps more than any other, has been dubbed *the* race to watch for predicting control of the Illinois Senate come 2003. Over the past 10 years, Republicans, under the leadership

of Wood Dale's James "Pate" Philip, have held the legislative reins in that chamber. They currently have a 32-27 majority.

But Democrats, and their leader Emil Jones Jr. of Chicago, head into this election armed with a map their party drew of the state's 177 legislative districts. Consequently, they appear to have a good shot at gaining control in the 59-member Senate.

"It certainly appears the map made three Republican seats disappear in the suburbs," says political scientist Kent Redfield, who studies legislative races at the University of Illinois' Springfield campus. "I think in suburban Cook County the map drawing gives a huge strategic advantage [to Democrats]."

Indeed, tweaking the legislative boundaries in the decennial remap threw up for grabs districts that had been electing Republicans. In some cases, incumbent Republicans were mapped into the same districts.

Thus, with Democrats expected to maintain control of the Illinois House

and make a strong run in the governor's race, winning the Senate would give them political power they've not experienced in decades — and the ability to push whatever policy agenda they choose. That is exactly why Republicans, and their allies, consider control of the Senate so vital.

Republican-friendly business groups, for instance, fear a Democratic sweep could yield fewer tax breaks for economic development and greater regulation of industry. It would also likely give labor unions newfound power in Springfield. Shifts are expected on social issues, too. Gun owners' groups, for example, predict more gun control laws if Democrats win. Traditionally, gun control proposals are well-received in the Democratic-controlled House, but go nowhere in the Republican-led Senate. A case in point happened in 1999, when, after the Illinois Supreme Court struck down a sweeping anti-crime law because of technical errors, Gov. George Ryan and many lawmakers rushed to re-enact key provisions. But in the Senate, Philip



Two years ago, Democratic state Rep. Susan Garrett (left) was targeted by Republicans but handily dispatched her GOP challenger by 64 percent. This year she's taking on an incumbent in her bid for the state Senate.

rallied his members and repeatedly rejected those efforts because they promoted increased penalties for those caught illegally carrying guns. In fact, the proposal would have made illegal gun transportation and possession a felony. Philip never did budge on that provision.

If Democrats sweep the Senate, that Republican checkpoint would be gone on nearly all public policy issues.

In many ways, Parker represents Senate Republicans' last hope. Even if she wins, there's a strong chance Democrats will control the chamber. If she loses, the GOP efforts are almost assuredly doomed.

"The reality is it's going to be tough for the Senate Republicans to get 30 seats, and 30 [is] the ultimate we can get," Parker says.

She adds that keeping a Republican majority in the Senate is crucial to providing political balance in a year of great Democratic opportunity.

But from her opponent's perspective, it's time for a change. "I hope to make the Senate much more responsive to the needs of Illinois citizens; that's exactly my reason for running," Garrett says. "[In] the Senate, more than any other place, whether Pate Philip likes the legislation is what carries the day."

Adding to the heat in this race between two industrious campaigners is its proximity to Chicago's ultra-expensive media market.

"That will be a very expensive and very well-watched race up here," says state Sen. Terry Link, a Vernon Hills Democrat and chairman of the Lake County Democratic Party. "I think if Parker is defeated, that will more than ensure a Democratic Senate. One thing I will say about Kathy Parker, she's a diligent, hardworking candidate. But so is Rep. Garrett."

In 1998, Garrett won the Illinois House seat left vacant when Republican Corinne Wood was tapped to run for lieutenant governor alongside George Ryan. Two years ago, Garrett was targeted by Republicans but handily dispatched GOP challenger Cesilie Price with 64 percent of the vote.

"I love to campaign. I'm one of those people who loves to go door to door," Garrett says. "When I was a kid, my family didn't have a lot of money. So I went door to door selling personalized Christmas cards. It's second nature for me now."

Parker is considered a tenacious campaigner, too. In her first campaign, she survived a three-way primary and then beat Democratic incumbent Grace

Mary Stern in one of 1994's highest-profile political contests.

"I was out there in the snow one night [during the primary] in my mukluks knocking on doors," Parker says. "In the general [election], I walked from June 3 to November 9. We walked all the precincts and that has been my style."

In fact, Parker's ability to campaign is the only reason Republican strategists believe they have a chance. If it were any other candidate, the district would be considered lost to Democrats, who have made surprising gains here.

Previously, the 29th District was primarily a suburban Cook County district, taking in the lakeshore communities of Evanston and Wilmette, and stretching west to Northbrook. But the new district is nearly split between Cook and Lake counties. Gone are many of the North Shore communities as the Cook County portion of the district has moved west to take in parts of Mount Prospect, Prospect Heights, and Des Plaines. In Lake County, the district runs along Lake Michigan, encompassing Highland Park and Lake Forest, an area that has recently sent Democrats to Springfield with greater frequency.

Over the past 10 years, this section of the state is among the fastest growing. City dwellers with Democratic



State Sen. Kathleen Parker's ability to campaign is the only reason Republican strategists believe they have a chance. If it were any other candidate, the district would be considered lost to Democrats, who have made surprising gains here.

allegiances have taken up residence in the suburbs, and newcomers to Illinois have moved in, perhaps unaware of the Republican power structure that has ruled the region.

Republican Gov. Jim Edgar carried this area by 20,000 votes in his 1994 election. But two years ago, Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush lost to Democrat Al Gore by 16,000 votes.

It's not unheard of for candidates to overcome the political leanings of their districts. Sen. Link first won in 1996 in a district that was 55 percent Republican. But it takes a huge effort and nonstop campaigning to pull off such an upset.

Parker and Garrett are both full-time lawmakers with business experience. Parker was a member of a local school board and the Regional Transportation Authority Board. Garrett has served on several community boards and is past president of the Friends of Ragdale, an artist's retreat, and the local League of Women Voters.

Both support abortion rights and have worked to reform financing of the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority. Both support laws that would require parental notification before a minor could have an abortion, and Garrett would expand the law further to include

other family members and the clergy. Garrett wants the General Assembly to take over the tollway system and have the final say on any toll increases. Parker's proposals don't go that far; rather, she calls for a freeze on toll rates until the tollway system has a management audit completed.

The two differ on executions. Parker supports the death penalty, while Garrett is an opponent.

Of course, much more is at stake than the ideological differences of these candidates. Their race is among the few Senate contests likely to determine political power in the Senate. All 59 Senate seats are on the ballot this November. Most are considered all but won by one party or the other. Only seven of the contests are considered to be in play.

It is in these so-called "target" races that political leaders and special interests focus their efforts and dollars. Political observers expect spending records to fall with so much at stake. Two years ago, state Sen. Wendell Jones, a Palatine Republican, and retired high school teacher Sue Walton, a Rolling Meadows Democrat, spent between them more than \$1.4 million. Jones won what to date is the most expensive legislative race in state history.

Already, Garrett and Parker are

nearing the half-million-dollar mark. Recently filed campaign finance reports show Parker raised more than \$242,000 in the first half of 2002. Garrett's total was just over \$201,000. Both amounts are expected to increase dramatically as the campaign season heats up in the coming weeks.

"This could be a very expensive race. I don't think there's any question about it," Redfield says.

Garrett and Parker may be the marquee match, but other Senate races are key. Perhaps the most fascinating political race in the Senate is taking place in the 15th District in Chicago's south suburbs.

State Sen. William "Bill" Shaw, a Dolton Democrat, has been a member of the Senate since 1993 and previously served in the Illinois House. He's also the mayor of Dolton and a political force in this area.

His challenger is James Meeks, the dynamic senior pastor at Salem Baptist Church of Chicago and a protégé of the Rev. Jesse Jackson. Meeks is running on the Honesty & Integrity Party ticket. If he wins, he plans to vote with the Democrats in electing Senate leadership.

Meanwhile, Republicans hope Meeks and Shaw split enough Democratic



In many ways, Parker represents Senate Republicans' last hope. Even if she wins, there's a strong chance Democrats will control the chamber. If she loses, the GOP efforts are almost assuredly doomed.

votes that their candidate, Phillip Arnold Jr. of Thornton, could emerge the surprise winner.

Meanwhile, Sen. Steven Rauschenberger, an Elgin Republican and chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, faces a new district — the 22nd — that isn't nearly as Republican-friendly. It forsakes western Kane County in favor of the Cook County suburbs of Hoffman Estates and Schaumburg. Democrat Al Gore won this area in the 2000 presidential election.

Rauschenberger has another apparent handicap going into this re-election bid. This spring, he presided over efforts to cut millions of dollars in state spending to balance the budget, thereby angering many special interest groups.

So Rauschenberger, who has served in the Senate since 1992, may have his hands full facing Democrat Robert Steffen of Sleepy Hollow. Steffen is a former prosecutor who narrowly lost the 2000 Kane County state's attorney's race in a county considered to be a Republican stronghold.

In southeastern Illinois, the 54th District race between state Sen. William O'Daniel, a Mount Vernon Democrat, and state Rep. John Jones, a Mount Vernon Republican, is downstate's version of the Parker-Garrett contest.

The 54th runs from Effingham south to Mount Vernon and then east to the Indiana border. O'Daniel is the popular incumbent who has represented much of this area in the Senate since 1985. But it has been years since O'Daniel has faced a serious election challenge.

Jones has represented half of O'Daniel's Senate district since 1995. He survived hard-fought elections in 1994, 1996 and 1998, when Democrats made him a target. "It takes a lot of hard work. That's nothing new to me," Jones says. "A lot of leg work from a lot of people."

This is an area where the need for jobs often blurs party lines. O'Daniel and Jones routinely set aside party differences to help their part of Illinois. Now they're going head-to-head in one of downstate's hottest races.

Deeper into southern Illinois, state Sen. David Luechtefeld, an Okawville Republican, is opposed by Tamaroa Democrat Charles Wayne Goforth, a former state representative. The 58th District runs south of the Metro East area to below Carbondale.

Luechtefeld has been a target in every race he's run. In 1996, he beat Democrat Barb Brown, a political science instructor at Southern Illinois University, by only 127 votes. Two years later, he again

faced Brown, but that time won by more than 6,400 votes.

Goforth is a former three-term House member and has picked up early labor endorsements. The union vote could be key, as evidenced by Luechtefeld's decision to vote against his Senate Republican colleagues this spring when they supported closing a state prison and eliminating hundreds of associated jobs in this area to help balance the state budget.

In east central Illinois, state Rep. Richard "Rick" Winkel Jr., a Champaign Republican, faces former Champaign Mayor Dan McCollum, a Democrat, for the 52nd District seat being vacated by longtime Republican Sen. Stanley Weaver of Urbana. Weaver has held the seat since 1971.

But the Democrats who drew this district added a challenge. It combines the economic woes of Danville with the high-tech college atmosphere of Champaign-Urbana, effectively eliminating one downstate Senate district to coincide with the area's loss of population. Much of the old Republican-leaning territory was removed in favor of the labor-friendly Danville area. The district begins at Champaign-Urbana and stretches east to Danville and on to the Indiana border.



Garrett says it's time for a change in the Senate, where Republicans, under the leadership of Wood Dale's James "Pate" Philip, have held the legislative reins for the past 10 years.

McCollum, mayor from 1987 to 1999, was enticed to come out of retirement and run because the new demographics make it conceivable a Democrat can win.

Winkel was effectively mapped out of the House district he was familiar with and survived a hard-fought Republican primary against state Sen. Judith Myers of Danville. He easily won in Champaign County, but received only 819 votes compared to Myers' 6,246 votes in Vermilion County. If Winkel and McCollum split the Champaign-Urbana area, Vermilion County could be the key battleground.

Another hot match exists northwest of Peoria, where voters in the 37th District will have their pick of two new faces. State Sen. Carl Hawkinson, a Galesburg Republican, has represented this area since 1987, but now he's running for lieutenant governor. Retired Illinois Department of Transportation engineer Dale Risinger of Peoria is the Republicans' standard-bearer in this race. He has the backing of several Peoria-area Republican powers, including state Rep. David Leitch. Risinger is making his first run at public office.

The Democratic candidate, Paul Mangieri of Galesburg, is the Knox

County state's attorney, the first Democrat ever elected to that county's top prosecutor post. Mangieri toyed earlier this year with running for lieutenant governor and traveled the state drumming up support before aborting the bid.

State Sen. Frank Watson, a Greenville Republican, also may be facing a surprisingly tough race in the 51st District. While Watson already represents much of this area, the newly drawn district is huge, stretching from just east of the Metro East area north to Decatur. The mix of farming communities, prison towns and Decatur's urban core could prove unpredictable.

Watson has served in the General Assembly since 1979. His challenger is former state Rep. John Dunn, a Decatur Democrat who served in the Illinois House from 1975 to 1995.

Most political observers say it will take an upset for Republicans to hold 30 seats and keep power in the Senate. Here's why. A total of 21 Republicans are all but ensured victory — most have no opponent. The GOP also has an advantage in the open seats near Peoria and Champaign-Urbana. That would give Republicans 23 seats.

Getting to 30 then becomes tricky.

There are 27 Democrats considered safe — again, most have no challenger — and Democrats hold the advantage in two more Chicago-area open seats. That gives Democrats 29 "safe" seats. They would only need one more victory in any of the targeted races to control the Senate. And several analysts believe the Democrats could end up with as many as 34 seats.

In contrast, Republicans must win the 23 seats where they have an edge, make sure the targeted incumbents — Parker, Rauschenberger, Watson and Luechtefeld — all win, get Jones to knock off O'Daniel and produce the GOP upset in the three-way race in the south suburbs.

Even then, they'd only be at 29 seats and in need of a major upset elsewhere.

It's an even darker picture for Republicans in the Illinois House.

Few anticipate any erosion of power from House Speaker Michael Madigan, a Chicago Democrat. His party currently has a 62-56 majority and has controlled the chamber since the 1996 elections. The primary goal for House Republican Leader Lee Daniels of Elmhurst is preventing the Democrats from getting a veto-proof 71-member majority.

"They drew a map to try to elect as many Democrats as possible. I can't

Legislative races to watch

Senate:

15th District: Sen. William "Bill" Shaw, Dolton Democrat, vs. Phillip Arnold Jr., Thornton Republican, vs. Chicagoan James Meeks, Honesty & Integrity Party. If Meeks, the dynamic senior pastor at Salem Baptist Church of Chicago, remains on the ballot, he presents a serious challenge to Shaw, a lawmaker since 1983, member of the Senate since 1993 and Dolton's mayor. Republicans hope a split could produce a win for Arnold.

22nd District: Sen. Steven Rauschenberger, an Elgin Republican, vs. Robert Steffen, a Sleepy Hollow Democrat. As the Senate Appropriations Committee chairman, Rauschenberger presided over state budget-cutting that raised the ire of many interest groups. The new district has a growing Democratic presence.

29th District: Sen. Kathleen Parker, a Northbrook Republican, vs. Rep. Susan Garrett, a Lake Forest Democrat. This is considered a pivotal race for both parties. Both candidates are tireless campaigners. Each also has won top-tier races in the past.

37th District: Dale Risinger, a Peoria Republican, vs. Paul Mangieri, a Galesburg Democrat. A key open Senate seat in central Illinois. Risinger has local backing, but Mangieri is the popular Knox County state's attorney who flirted with the idea of running statewide for lieutenant governor.

51st District: Sen. Frank Watson, Greenville Republican, vs. John Dunn, Decatur Democrat. This newly created district stretches from Mascoutah to Decatur. Watson, a lawmaker since 1979, has served much of the area. Dunn is a former 10-term state representative.

52nd District: Rep. Richard "Rick" Winkel Jr., Champaign Republican, vs. Dan McCollum, Champaign Democrat. This is another seat with no incumbent senator. Winkel has served in the House since 1995 and is looking to move to the Senate. He faces McCullom, the former mayor of Champaign.

54th District: Sen. William O'Daniel, Mount Vernon Democrat, vs. Rep. John Jones, Mount Vernon Republican. O'Daniel has served this largely Democratic district since 1985. Jones is a four-term state representative who has proven Republicans can win here.

House:

20th District: Rep. Michael McAuliffe, Chicago Republican, vs. Rep. Robert J. Bugielski, Chicago Democrat. This is a matchup of two incumbent lawmakers. McAuliffe is a three-term state representative, while Bugielski was first elected in 1986.

35th District: Rep. Anne Zickus, Palos Hills Republican, vs. Kevin Carey Joyce, Chicago Democrat. Zickus is finishing her seventh term, but faces Joyce, the son of Jeremiah Joyce, a former state senator and a pal of Mayor Richard Daley.

65th District: Rep. Rosemary Mulligan, Des Plaines Republican, vs. Barbara Jones, Park Ridge Democrat. Mulligan, a House member since 1993, has become a perennial target for Democrats but has fended off all recent challengers.

89th District: Jim Sacia, Pecatonica Republican, vs. Warwick Stevenson, Elizabeth Democrat. This is a key open seat race. Sacia, a Winnebago County board member, defeated four primary opponents to garner the nomination. Stevenson is the son of former U.S. Sen. Adlai Stevenson III.

103rd District: Rep. Thomas "Tom" Berns, Urbana Republican, vs. Naomi Jakobsson, Urbana Democrat. A top House race. Berns narrowly won the seat two years ago, capturing 53 percent of the vote. Jakobsson narrowly lost a House race in 1996.

John Patterson

think of anything good to say about the map," says Gregg Durham, spokesman for Daniels, who stepped down as state GOP chairman this summer.

Again, only a handful of the 118 House seats are considered in play.

In northwest Cook County, state Rep. Michael McAuliffe, a Chicago Republican, faces state Rep. Robert Bugielski, a Chicago Democrat, for the 20th District seat.

Also in the northwestern Chicago suburbs, state Rep. Rosemary Mulligan, a Des Plaines Republican, is expected to face a tough challenge from Park Ridge Democrat Barbara Jones for the 65th District seat.

In the Champaign-Urbana area, state Rep. Thomas "Tom" Berns, an Urbana Republican, squares off against Urbana Democrat Naomi Jakobsson. Berns barely won two years ago, and Jakobsson barely lost a House race in 1996.

Madigan is all but ensured control in the House. And Democrats believe Rod Blagojevich, their party's nominee for governor, gives them their best shot at the governor's mansion in almost 30 years. A majority of the Illinois Supreme Court justices also are Democrats. So claiming the Illinois Senate could give Democrats unprecedented power in the legislative process.

Not everyone is ready to concede control, though.

"This certainly is not a done deal, given the past effectiveness of the two campaign organizations and the leaders' ability to raise money," says Redfield, the political scientist at the University of Illinois at Springfield. "Clearly the Senate Republicans have had a much better track record during the 1990s."

Some Democrats fear overconfidence could be their demise, and observers caution political surprises may be lurking that could throw any race into turmoil.

"Some candidate will say something wild, or some candidate will have some skeleton in the closet," Redfield says. "There's always going to be something weird happen in an election."

And so Parker and Garrett hit the streets, knocking on doors and talking to voters, knowing all eyes are on their every move. □

John Patterson is state government editor for the (Arlington Heights) Daily Herald.

Economic meltdown

Steel hasn't had a good run lately. And there's a cost for each shuttered coke-making facility, turned-off blast furnace and empty refinishing plant

by Stephanie Zimmermann

When Northwestern Steel and Wire Co. closed its plant in Sterling a year ago last May, the tiny town in the cornfields 120 miles west of Chicago was dealt a swift, hard blow. Some 1,400 jobs evaporated in a community of just 14,000 people. Northwestern, the town's biggest employer and one of a handful of manufacturers in a largely rural area, melted away like scrap steel hitting a hot furnace.

The 122-year-old company tried to hang on with help from state and federal programs and bankruptcy protection. But it could no longer compete against cheaper imports from Japan, Southeast Asia and the former Soviet countries.

"The loss of 1,400 jobs certainly had an impact on the community," says Sterling City Manager Jay Wieland. Sterling's troubles didn't end there. Another 4,000 retired steelworkers also face hard times because Northwestern is no longer around to provide health insurance, and their pensions, though guaranteed by a federal program, have been slashed drastically.

But the community fought back. Through volunteer fundraisers, food banks, job counseling programs and an aggressive economic development plan, the residents of Sterling tried to salvage their town. "It was just unbelievable, the way people in the community worked together and pulled together to address the problems," Wieland says.

Sterling also was lucky. Within months of the plant closing, a former customer of Northwestern, Leggett & Platt Inc. of Carthage, Mo., expressed interest in buying a portion of the 700-acre site, despite such environmental problems as a site that needed extensive cleanup and a cooling pond that needed relining. Though Northwestern had the same

so-called "mini-mill" that Leggett & Platt will use — which heats scrap steel rather than iron ore to make steel products — the plant needed to be remodeled and recommissioned.

So, eager to replace whatever jobs they could, city officials enlisted the help of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs in putting together a package of economic incentives to spur site cleanup and worker retraining. Their efforts were rewarded this past summer when Leggett & Platt's new Sterling Steel Co. began readying part of the property. Sometime this fall, Sterling Steel plans to produce its first batch of steel rod, which will be sent to other plants that make components for Leggett & Platt's furniture and bedding business.

Pam McDonough, who heads the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, sees Sterling as a model for what can be done with shuttered steel mills. "I think the Sterling Steel Co. gives me the hope I was looking for."

The future definitely looks brighter in Sterling: There will be 200 to 250 new jobs, most of them going to workers laid off from the old plant. Another 100 to 200 jobs are expected to be created at companies that will provide transport and other services for Sterling Steel.

But tempering the jubilation is the realization that most of the original jobs are gone. While steel will again be made in Sterling, its presence is diminished. As many communities in Illinois and around the country have learned, steel-making today is a different industry and the days when steel could support a region's way of life are gone.

The steel industry has been grappling

with problems for years: old, expensive-to-build plants, high labor costs, high "legacy" health care costs for workers who spent their lives in dangerous and dirty jobs, pensions for retirees and, over the past few years, devastating competition from cheaper foreign steel. In response, the industry has slashed its workforce, and some companies have built the smaller, cheaper mini-mills. But that hasn't stopped the economic bleeding.

Steel has not had a good run lately. Nationwide, 33 companies — or about one-third of the industry — have declared bankruptcy since 1997, including such Illinois companies as Calumet Steel of Chicago Heights and Acme Metals of Riverdale. Laclede Steel Co. filed for bankruptcy in 1998 and again in 2001, finally shutting down its Alton mill a year ago July.

LTV Corp. shut down its steel operations at the end of 2001, affecting about 7,500 jobs at its facilities, including its mill in East Chicago, Ind., and its coke-making facility in South Chicago. An investment group, the International Steel Group, has taken over some of the old LTV operations and now has a pared-down workforce at East Chicago and at LTV's former Hennepin finishing plant in north central Illinois.

In the latest bad news, Granite City Steel's corporate parent, National Steel, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection last March, leaving that community of 31,000 across the Mississippi River from St. Louis worried about the fate of 2,800 workers and the tax revenue it was counting on.

The economics of steel-making wasn't always so grim. Steel, after all, was the industry that helped build the nation,

from the Empire State Building in New York to the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. In the 1960s, close to 600,000 people worked in the steel industry. Steel centers in Pennsylvania and Northwest Indiana boomed.

But 20 years ago, that began to change. An industry hurt by competition from imports, its own technological inefficiencies and a bloated payroll downsized sharply, eliminating tens of thousands of jobs and slicing the workforce to half what it had been just two decades earlier. The layoffs continue, and now only about 142,000 people are employed in the steel industry nationwide, about 15,000 of them in Illinois.

Yet, as wrenching as the 1980s were for the U.S. steel industry, the resulting layoffs and innovations in automated technology put the industry in a better spot economically going into the 1990s. From the early '80s to the late '90s, labor productivity in the steel industry tripled, from about 10.1 man-hours per ton to 3.2 man-hours per ton in 1998, according to the American Iron and Steel Institute, a trade group that includes 34 steel producer members and 146 other companies that supply or buy from the steel industry. "We actually produce more steel today with fewer people," says Nancy Gravatt, vice president of communications for the group. Companies felt strong enough to promise workers taking early retirement that they would get health benefits and a decent pension to boot.

At the same time, U.S. steelmakers have been changing some of their technology. The older, so-called "integrated" operations turn coal into better burning coke, then use blast furnaces and basic oxygen furnaces to make steel from that coke, iron ore and limestone. In turn, the "rolling mills" churn out rough or finished steel products. The newer mini-mills make steel from scrap with an electric arc furnace. These plants are less expensive to set up, have lower materials and energy costs because they are melting scrap, and often locate in areas of the country where unions are weak and labor costs are low.

While many industry observers believe at least some traditional

integrated operations will be around indefinitely — because they can make purer types of steel the scrap users can't — mini-mills are grabbing an increasing share of the market and now produce just over half the nation's output of steel.

In the 1990s, the steel industry, including the integrated plants and the mini-mills, believed it was poised for good times. Construction demand was high, a positive sign for steelmakers. But then the Asian economies began to falter, and steel faced a new wave of troubles. Construction projects in developing Asian nations such as Thailand and Indonesia were halted — and all that leftover cheap steel, along with an additional supply from the former Soviet Union, Japan, China and Taiwan, found a convenient market in the United States. Steel manufactured overseas, often at plants with much lower labor costs, flooded into this country. In 1998, a record 41.5 million tons of foreign steel came into the United States. As a result of oversupply, steel prices plunged and U.S. producers scrambled to file complaints against unfair dumping, to no avail. At the tail end of last year, the price for hot roll coil steel — a type sold straight from the mill to companies that refine it — hit a 20-year low of \$210 per ton.

There has been a human cost, too, for each shuttered coke-making facility, each turned-off blast furnace and each empty refinishing plant. Thousands of workers who had spent their careers making steel are now out of work and not likely to find another blue-collar job that can pay \$20 an hour plus benefits. The unluckiest are the retirees, who took buyouts and now have been hit with a double whammy: decreasing pensions and escalating health insurance costs as their former employers slide into financial trouble. Thousands of LTV retirees and their dependents, for instance, have lost their medical benefits. And small neighborhood pockets on Chicago's Southeast Side, around South Chicago and Hegewisch, places with meaningful names like Irondale, Slag Valley and Millgate, places where generations of immigrants found work in the steel mills, have discovered their monikers are oddly out of whack with

rising local steel unemployment.

"People who have worked their whole lives in expectation of a retirement and health care coverage are losing it," says Jim Robinson, director of the United Steelworkers of America's District 7, which covers Illinois and Indiana. "You have people say, 'Well, I think I'll take my heart medication every other day.' That's crazy."

Russell Lovell, 51, a steelworker since 1969 at Northwestern Steel and Wire in Sterling before he was laid off last year, lost his health insurance and saw his pension cut from about \$2,000 before taxes to about \$1,000. A lifelong resident of the area, he has a house payment, a car payment and now spends \$450 a month for health insurance for himself and his wife. "I keep waiting for the other shoe to drop."

Still, Lovell considers himself lucky. His two children are grown, he's in good health and he got a job with the international steelworkers union assisting his former colleagues. He knows one guy who has \$500 a month in health care costs and is getting only \$300 a month in pension benefits. Other workers have lingering health problems from years spent in the dirty, stuffy mill. "They knew they were sacrificing their bodies and their longevity for fairly good wages, fairly good pensions and lifetime health insurance," Lovell says. "All of a sudden, the bottom drops out."

There are plenty of potential solutions to the problems faced by steelworkers and their employers. Some want the government to give financial help to steel company retirees, a move proponents argue would also prevent legacy health costs from torpedoing efforts by some companies to merge. Industry analysts urge such consolidation. And some hope new tariffs — taxes on foreign steel brought into this country — will help.

In fact, many union workers agree with their employers that the first priority is to attack cheap foreign steel. "Even my most successful members are not earning enough to cover their capital right now," says Tom Danjczek, president of the Steel Manufacturers Association, a Washington, D.C.-based trade group for mini-mill producers.

After months of intense lobbying — and warnings from critics that protectionism will only hurt American businesses that make things with steel — President George W. Bush in March imposed tariffs on a broad range of steel products under Section 201 of the 1974 Trade Act. The tariffs, which tax foreign imports up to 30 percent of the manufacturing cost, depending on the type of product, will be in effect for three years. The hope is that the domestic steel industry will be able to catch its breath and compete again on its own.

Supporters of that move, including Robinson of the steelworkers union representing Illinois and Indiana, say the tariffs are necessary — and fair — considering that the U.S. government assisted some of those same foreign countries in developing their industries and had refused to enforce trade law. “American steel has been sacrificed to the foreign policy decisions of the United States,” Robinson says. The tariff program, he argues, “is enough to get the industry back on its feet, if there’s some consolidation and restructuring taking place.”

But even some who support tariffs are not completely confident about the prospects. “It’s a limited solution for a limited amount of time,” says Danjczek. He suggests the U.S. government needs to try to pressure other countries to reduce their steel production.

Others argue tariffs are simply bad policy. “You can’t be protectionist and try to exist in the world marketplace,” says McDonough, the state’s commerce chief.

Robert Crandall, a senior fellow in economic studies at the Brookings Institution and the author of two books on the steel industry, agrees, calling tariffs “dreadful foreign policy” for a nation that preaches the value of open markets. “This makes us look like the



Inland steelworkers, East Chicago yards, 1949

hapless giant whose steel industry can’t compete, and that’s not true. Half of the industry can’t compete. The other half [the mini-mills] can” because of their cheaper overhead and lower labor costs, he says. The problems of the old, inefficient integrated operations won’t be solved by tariffs on foreign steel, he says.

Worse, Crandall says, in the current poor economy, the last thing automobile and equipment manufacturers need is added costs from more expensive steel. Every steel job gained by the tariffs, he says, will cost U.S. steel-using industries up to 13 jobs.

A handful of companies are considering merging their operations, to make the U.S. steel industry more efficient and keep costs down for steel producers and buyers.

The steelworkers union argues the solution to the domestic steel crisis needs another component: a program to address the hardships faced by former steelworkers who were moved out of work. It’s not fair for those workers to bear the cost of restructuring in the form of lost health insurance and pensions, the union says. Meanwhile, steelmakers in Europe have a nationalized health service to back up their laid-off workers. In Robinson’s view, the federal government should help America’s retired steelworkers. Preserving the American steel industry — and its workers — is paramount, he

says: “You can’t have a nation of burger flippers and doormen. You have to make things.”

The proposed Steel Industry Legacy Relief Act, sponsored by U.S. Reps. Ray LaHood, a Peoria Republican, and John Dingell, a Michigan Democrat, would create and support health insurance for the retirees of steel, iron ore and coke companies. At the same time, the plan would spur much-needed consolidation of the remaining steel

companies by taking the issue of legacy health care costs off the table.

Meanwhile, Illinois officials hope more hurting steel towns will undertake redevelopment. They see positive signs in International Steel Group’s recent purchase of LTV’s old Hennepin finishing plant in north central Illinois and renewed interest in the bankrupt Acme Steel Co. mill in Riverdale. And they hail Solo Cup Co.’s plan to develop part of the 576-acre lakefront site that was home to the huge U.S. Steel South Works mill until its demise in 1992. “We do see activity that is positive,” McDonough says.

As for Sterling’s recovery, community leaders are glad they have a development plan — and they intend to keep diversifying the local economy.

City leaders are grateful for two other local manufacturers, National Manufacturing Co. and Wahl Clipper Co., that together employ about 1,600 people and are not in the steel-making business.

“We’ve been very fortunate to have diversified in recent years,” says Wieland, the city manager. “That really made the difference for us. That really helped us.” □

Stephanie Zimmermann is a reporter at the Chicago Sun-Times. Her most recent piece for the magazine, which appeared in February, analyzed the economics of the airline industry.

AIR WARS

Pollution respects no boundaries. And Illinois is looking increasingly to the federal government to mediate high-stakes squabbles

by Bill Lambrecht

Not long ago, all pollution was local, as they say of politics. Or that's how many Illinoisans saw it.

But that was before it became clear that pollution respects no boundaries, least of all political ones. What has evolved since is warfare among the states and regions, with Illinois looking increasingly to the federal government to mediate high-stakes squabbles over air quality. And, judging by what happened in Washington, D.C. to an obscure but important clean air rule, this year's battles could be critical.

Since the 1980s, Illinois political leaders have worked aggressively to blunt criticism that sulfur dioxide from coal-fired power plants is landing, in the form of acid rain, far from this state. Their task has been much the same over the years for the airborne constituents of ozone — nitrous oxide and volatile organic compounds — that travel eastward on prevailing winds.

The battle over enforcement of the federal Clean Air Act has become a series of skirmishes between these regions, and, after one of the most noteworthy engagements in the recent past, Illinois industries have reason to declare a victory.

When the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced in June it was overhauling the so-called "new source review" program that has regulated air pollution at power plants, the agency marked a significant retreat by President George W. Bush's administration from an environmental initiative that has bedeviled power companies and oil refineries and

dampened markets for Illinois' flagging coal industry.

The change amounted to cancellation of a bargain struck long ago.

Under the 1977 federal Clean Air Act, new industries were required to install the best available control equipment to reduce air emissions. But many plants already in existence were "grandfathered" and allowed to keep operating as long as they installed pollution control equipment when making modifications that extended the lives of the plants. At that point, they would need to submit to new source reviews — a process that many in the energy industry viewed as a bureaucratic maze that wound toward expensive capital outlays.

Many of these old, coal-fired plants proceeded with construction without submitting to the reviews, prompting former President Bill Clinton to take the offensive. In 1999, that administration and four Eastern states filed lawsuits against 51 power plants — among them the 32-year-old Baldwin plant in southern Illinois — alleging they had carried out modifications without enrolling in the federal pollution-fighting program and that, as a result, air quality was diminished in Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey and New York. More than half of those plants, many in the Midwest, had begun operations in the 1940s and 1950s, long before Americans began taking stock of fouled air.

Enter the Bush Administration, which heard industries' pleas that new source review be scrapped. Just a few months into office, an energy task force

headed by Vice President Dick Cheney recommended changing the program in order to "provide regulatory certainty to allow utilities to make modifications to their plants without fear of new litigation."

Eric Schaefer, who was the environmental agency's enforcement chief at the time, reflects on some of the behind-the-scenes maneuvering. By the first autumn of President George W. Bush's presidency, Schaefer says, he was hearing from political appointees in his agency that the administration was receptive to industries' request.

"By the middle of the fall, when the days were getting shorter, we were getting some pretty dark signals that we were not going to be making any progress in our lawsuits because the utilities were hearing from the White House that this law was going to get fixed," says Schaefer, who resigned this year prior to the EPA decision.

On June 14, when the days were nearly at their longest, EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman declared the program would indeed be fixed. The timing of her announcement surprised career EPA officials, who weren't notified beforehand and speculated that the White House acted when it did after being embarrassed the week before by an EPA report to the United Nations on another clean air issue. That report, which Bush disavowed and blamed on "the bureaucracy," concluded that global warming is attributable to the pollutants generated by people.

At her news conference on new source review, Whitman declared the



program would not be mothballed but improved, remarking that it had prevented companies from making modifications that would produce energy more efficiently and cut pollution. Suddenly, years of expensive government litigation landed in limbo.

Illinois' energy industry happily received the news — not just for the immediate benefits it might yield but as a harbinger of more regulatory relaxation down the line. In Whitman's remarks, Taylor Pensoneau, president of the Illinois Coal Association, sees the future brightening for this state's high-sulfur coal. "The potential is there and the framework is there for increased power generation in Illinois, and with it the use of Illinois coal."

Michael Menne, manager of environmental services at St. Louis-based Ameren Corp., which operates four coal-fired plants in Illinois, says his company looks forward to installing such equipment as turbines and fans without worry of landing in hot water. "We always felt like it was kind of a trap," he says of new source review, adding that his company had sometimes held back on modifications out of fear of where it would lead.

Predictably, environmental advocates reacted with outrage, sentiments that Bush fanned a day later by making a

fundraising trip to Houston, one of the nation's smoggiest cities and home to several of its energy giants. The word "rollback" has been used since to describe what the administration had done to the centerpiece of clean air protections, and a program that was largely obscure until June likely will be debated in coming political campaigns.

On Capitol Hill, meanwhile, members of Congress have been dissecting new source review. In mid-July, Illinois' Baldwin plant was singled out in a Senate Environment committee hearing as one of the old coal-fired plants that threatens health. Eric Schaefer, the ex-EPA enforcement chief turned advocate, points to a study estimating that the Baldwin emissions alone lead to an estimated 420 premature deaths yearly.

Numbers like these raise the temperatures in Eastern state capitals.

In June, Maryland's Gov. Parris Glendening declared plans to sue to restore new source review's intended function. Frank O'Donnell, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based Clean Air Trust, explains why many Easterners embraced the program. "It was a fundamental tool," he says, "to prevent major increases in emissions at big industrial plants that affect not only local communities but people

in states hundreds of miles away."

In the coming months, Midwesterners also will be watching the fate of the administration's recently proposed "Clear Skies" legislation, which the White House says will reduce harmful air emissions by 70 percent by 2018. The plan aims to cut sulfur dioxide and nitrous oxide with a market-based approach, giving industries the flexibility to reduce emissions or buy pollution credits from industries that already have. The proposal, outlined in July, triggered yet another round of clean air combat, with environmental groups voicing skepticism that it would work.

Meanwhile, such health advocates as Brian Urbaszewski of the American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago worry that polluting power plants are being handed a new lease on life. "We have these creaky old plants in Illinois that don't have pollution control equipment and that makes them cheaper to run. They're beaters." □

Bill Lambrecht is a Washington, D.C.-based reporter who writes about environmental issues for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. His piece for Illinois Issues on the politics of federal waterway policy appeared in the July/August 2001 issue.

State GOP picks a leader

The Illinois Republican Party turned to retired businessman **Gary MacDougal** for leadership. The party struggled to come up with a successor following the resignation of House Minority Leader **Lee Daniels** after several notables, including former Gov. Jim Edgar, declined to take the job.



Gary MacDougal

MacDougal, a conservative Chicagoan who serves on the United Parcel Service board, was tapped by GOP gubernatorial candidate Jim Ryan. MacDougal had been an adviser to Ryan's campaign. The GOP state central committee unanimously elected MacDougal to the post at a meeting in Oak Brook.

Daniels stepped down from the party leadership post as federal investigators looked into whether House Republican staff had done party work on state time.

Southern Illinois has a prosecutor

It took nearly a year for the U.S. Senate to confirm federal prosecutor **Miriam Miquelon** as U.S. attorney for southern Illinois.

Miquelon had been forwarded for the post by Republican U.S. Sen. Peter Fitzgerald, but his fellow Illinoisan, Democratic U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin took some time to review her file.

Miquelon has specialized in tax-related crimes and bank fraud as a prosecutor in the East St. Louis-based district. Among her more famous trials: prosecution of U.S. Rep. Jerry Costello's former business partner Amiel Cueto.

Shift in Senate

Matthew O'Shea, village administrator of Forest Park, has been named to replace **Thomas Walsh** in the Illinois Senate. Walsh, a La Grange Park Republican, stepped down after almost a decade to take an appointment on the Illinois Labor Relations Board.

Walsh, whose district was merged with fellow Republican Dan Cronin's of Elmhurst, lost his primary race. O'Shea's term in the west suburban district runs until January.

A Westchester resident, O'Shea previously worked as chief of staff for state Rep. James Durkin, the Republican candidate for U.S. Senate.

O BITS

Robert Healey

A consummate organizer, the longtime Chicago labor leader planned his own traditional Irish funeral after he was diagnosed with lung cancer. The retired director of the Illinois Department of Labor, who died July 22, was 72.

Healey had been vice president of the American Federation of Teachers and president of the Chicago Teachers Union, the Chicago Federation of Labor and the Illinois Federation of Teachers.

"I said he was the reincarnation of an Irish or Scottish chieftain," says his longtime friend and union colleague Don Turner, former Chicago Federation of Labor president. "He was a leader born. He had an ability to crystallize what people were thinking and to summarize the views on an issue."

Healey, who was a member of the Illinois Labor Relations Board at the time of his death, began his career as an English teacher at Gage Park High School. Turner, who taught there with Healey, says it was at Gage Park that Healey's interest in labor issues was born. When Healey created a poetry club in the mid-1960s, he wanted students to sit on the floor, but the principal objected.

"It was outrage about that and his view and image of intellectual freedom that got him fired up and interested in the union," Turner says. "He was a very passionate person about labor issues, particularly about teachers."

William Linn Day

When he was chosen editor of *Illinois Issues*, he was close to retirement with a lot of accomplishments to look back on. But the years he spent guiding this publication through its formative issues set standards that are followed 27 years later, a continuing legacy to the man who laid the groundwork. Bill Day, 90, died June 23 in Springfield.

"Bill was the presiding editorial genius of the magazine," says J. Michael Lennon, who followed Day as publisher. "He had a vast knowledge of public policy and politics, and he knew all of the political actors of the time."

Day came to the magazine, first as editor then publisher, from the Illinois Legislative Council. He had already served as an aide to two state auditors, Orville Hodge and Lloyd Morey, before moving to Washington, D.C., to work for the U.S. Census Bureau. In 1959, Bill rejoined the legislative council staff. He served as its research director from 1962 until 1974, when officials at Sangamon State University, now the University of Illinois at Springfield, asked him to take the reins of their fledgling statewide public policy monthly magazine and teach in the college of public affairs.

Born in Chicago, Day grew up in Glen Ellyn and went to the University of Illinois for his journalism degree, which he received in 1934. He returned to the U of I two decades later and earned a master's degree in political science.

Day's journalism career began while he was still an undergrad. In his senior year, he was editor of *The Daily Illini*. Then he wrote editorials and a Statehouse column for the *Illinois State Journal*, taking a leave to edit the 1941-42 *Illinois Blue Book*.

"Bill was the classic old-time editor," says Lennon. "He was very well-read and an expert grammarian. And he had a great love and concern for the state of Illinois."

New schools chief hits the books



Robert Schiller

Robert Schiller, a seasoned straight-shooter, is Illinois' new state superintendent of education.

His record of producing improvements in various types of systems is what made him the Illinois State Board of Education's choice, says Chairman Ronald Gidwitz.

The new education superintendent says he plans "to take a hard run at trying to solve some of the vexing problems that we have facing public education here in Illinois and in the nation." Illinois' challenges include the need to recruit more teachers and reform school funding.

The board plucked Schiller out of the Shreveport, La., school system, where he had been superintendent since 1999. District scores on national standardized and state assessment tests improved during his tenure, as did the district's bond rating.

Schiller was state superintendent of instruction in Michigan in the early '90s, and during that time the state traded property taxes as the primary school funding source for sales and other types of taxes. His assignments

prior to Michigan were as deputy state superintendent in Delaware and Louisiana.

Between Shreveport and Michigan he also had a two-year stint as interim chief of Baltimore schools, where he led a reorganization, initiated a teacher recruitment program and helped wipe out a deficit. He has also taught and held administrative positions in local school districts in New Jersey.

In recent years, Schiller has been a finalist in several big city school superintendent searches in places such as Denver and New Orleans and has developed a reputation as tough and outspoken. A New Orleans *Times-Picayune* editorial in December of 1998 urging the school board there to round up new candidates beyond the trio of finalists that included Schiller complained about Schiller's "peevish" response when he faced hostile questioning in public interviews.

Schiller promised reporters at the press conference announcing his hiring that he would be accessible and work with all of the stakeholders in Illinois' 2 million-student school system.

In naming Schiller to the \$225,000 three-year position effective August 1, the board bypassed involvement of a new governor in the decision.

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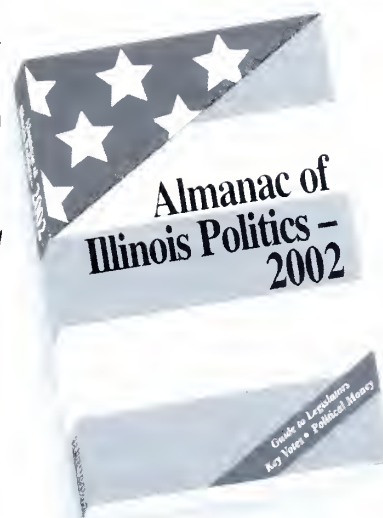
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Trapping should not be a proud Illinois tradition

I find it appalling that *Illinois Issues* considers trapping and selling animals a great tradition of this state (see July/August, page 6). Trapping is a barbaric enterprise. The steel trap captures the animals, and they either starve to death in excruciating pain or chew off the limb that has been snared. If the animal is lucky, the trapper will find it soon after being caught and beat the animal to death. Furthermore, according to the statistics in the article, there appears to be no economic benefit to this horrible enterprise. Raccoon pelts sell for \$6.30 each. Therefore to make a paltry \$600, one would have to torture at least 100 animals. And \$600 isn't going to get one rich or buy too much. All in all, there does not seem to be a great deal of justification for trapping. This sure is not a tradition to make the great state of Illinois proud.

*Holly Waters
Northbrook*

Office closings hurt rural patrons and communities

I am concerned over the closing of eight local offices of the Department of Human Services. These closings, which primarily and prejudicially target downstate rural offices, will not only directly impact the downstate recipients of the programs, but will impact entire rural communities.

Only two of the offices to be closed are in Cook County; the rest are in small, rural communities with no public transportation. For many of the elderly, disabled and families who use programs, finding transportation will not be possible. In rural Illinois, we do not have a bus every 10 minutes. For persons who need services, the effect of the closed offices will be that they and/or their children will simply not get the needed benefits.

These citizens are being given the strong message that their needs are not as important as the needs of persons in larger counties/cities. How

is an elderly person with failing eyesight supposed to take a 30- to 50-mile round trip to meet with agency staff? How is the young family with a car that barely runs supposed to buy gas and keep the car running well enough to sign up their children for KidCare? How is the illiterate person supposed to fill out paperwork without the help of human services office staff who have always assisted them?

Although citizens of small counties pay the same taxes as citizens in other counties, they will not be receiving the same level of services. How can this be fair? Maybe there aren't enough votes in these small counties to matter to those who make these decisions.

In the Scott County office there are over 450 names on file of individuals receiving service in some way. The operating expenses for the Scott County office, including salaries, utilities and rent do not amount to more than \$200,000 per year.

If the state can fill two high-level jobs, one vacant for seven years, at the \$100,000-per-job salary level, how can they justify closing the Scott County office? Is it more important to give two politically well-connected people a "fat" state job than it is to provide services to 450 persons? Is it really necessary for the poorest and neediest citizens of rural Illinois to pay for the many pork barrel projects funded during the last four years?

In addition to the direct and negative impact to the clients, the office closings will stress already challenged small communities. Dollars not being spent locally will further drain an already tenuous economy and could lead to the closing of businesses, additional unemployment and further degeneration of the small rural town.

The closing of these offices amounts to a classic example of "wrongthink." It will create more problems than it will solve. Let's not put the burden of poor budgeting at the state level on the backs of needy, rural people.

*Fred Thady
Jacksonville*



Write us

Your comments are welcome. Please keep them brief (250 words). We reserve the right to excerpt them.

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Help budget crunch: Eliminate TIF districts

One step to help alleviate Illinois' financial crises is to eliminate programs that reward or encourage management inefficiencies in state and local governmental bodies. Taxpayer money allocated to Tax Increment Financing should be the first cut.

Economic freedom is essential. The elected must eliminate immoral loopholes allowing subsidies or sweetheart deals. It is morally wrong to require others to pay for any single "private" development. Each taxpayer needs to insist that his/her legislators eliminate misguided incentive programs to help balance many budgets.

*James McGill
Pekin*

Credit due

David Lee Zellers, a monument specialist and owner of Zellers Tombstone Repair, provided the photograph on page 10 of the July/August issue.

Robert Davis



A South Side preacher follows in his mentor's footsteps and jumps into the political arena

by Robert Davis

It's been quite a year for the flashy, Jaguar-driving South Side preacher, who spent the last decade championing such local issues as banning alcohol billboards and decrying police brutality, all the time building a little Baptist church in the economically depressed Roseland community into what he now rather immodestly calls "The Greatest Church in the World."

Beyond the occasional seconds-long talking headshot on the local television news, the Rev. James Meeks, 45, has been relatively unknown outside of Chicago, doing the necessary trenchwork to help his climb up the city's black power ladder. But this year, he skipped up to the top rung, getting a coveted pull up from the Rev. Jesse Jackson, probably the best-known black leader the United States has seen since the death of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

At the end of July, Jackson, at the annual convention of the Rainbow/Push Coalition, which he originally founded in the late 1960s as "Operation Breadbasket," announced he was anointing Meeks as his eventual successor to head the organization. Although only 60, Jackson, like the loudest lion in the jungle, realizes he will not be around forever, and he wants to assure that the person who takes his place will be someone he has chosen.

"Organizations that don't have a line of succession are traumatized by it," says Jackson, who seems to have found the right person to carry on his tradition.

During his 17 years as head pastor at Salem Baptist Church, Meeks has built the congregation from an estimated 200 to this year's estimated 16,000, making it, according to the church's lively audio-augmented Web site, the home of "the largest Sunday School in Chicago" and "the largest Christian book store in the Chicagoland area." He wears expensive suits and broadcasts his sermons on the Internet and three television stations. The only thing meek about him is his name.

But until this year, most of Meeks' activities have been parochial. He has served as the executive vice president of Jackson's organization for several years and was the first to step forward to defend the \$35,000 payment to the mother of Jackson's illegitimate child as "severance pay." He was an active supporter of Jesse Jackson Jr.'s successful bid for a U. S. representative seat and made local waves with his marches against the availability of Internet pornography at the public library.

This year, however, he emerged on the national scene as the "spiritual adviser" to Chicago singer R. Kelly, charged with child pornography, popping up next to the entertainer when he defended himself on the BET national cable channel.

Now, following in his mentor's footsteps, Meeks is jumping into the political arena. He's running as an independent candidate against Democratic incumbent Illinois state Sen. William Shaw, the Dolton mayor whose twin brother, Robert, holds an elected seat on the

Cook County Board of Tax Appeals and who made headlines as a flamboyant Chicago alderman. Although the Shaws have built up a formidable political machine over the years, Meeks is relying on the help of the Jacksons to pull out a November victory. The Republican candidate, Thornton Police Chief Phillip Arnold Jr., isn't viewed as much of a contender in the heavily African-American Democratic district.

It's an election Meeks can't lose. If he gets the most votes, he's instantly vaulted into the slim ranks of novice politicians who knocked off an established power structure and gained a forum for populist causes. If he doesn't get the most votes, he still increases his recognition, maintains the promise of taking over Jackson's organization and launches what might be a potent political army in a city where the black political power structure has virtually dissolved since the death of the late Mayor Harold Washington. Jesse Jackson Sr., for instance, managed to lose elections for such offices as Chicago mayor and United States president, and just got stronger in the process.

In fact, an argument might be made that winning a seat in the Illinois Senate in November might not be a good thing for the rapidly rising reverend. It might slow him down. □

Robert Davis covered politics and government for the Chicago Tribune for more than 30 years and now teaches journalism at Columbia College in Chicago.

Mike Morsch



Some tips for Paul Vallas as he settles in "The City of Brotherly Shove"

by Mike Morsch

I'm the new guy here. As such, it falls upon me to give advice to someone who is going to be the new guy where I used to be, which is southeastern Pennsylvania.

So this is a bit of a heads up for Paul Vallas, who has been in Philadelphia for a few months. Vallas, as you may recall, turned the Chicago schools system in the right direction, for which he was thanked by being nudged out of office by Mayor Richard M. Daley. Vallas then ran for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in Illinois. By coming up short in that race, he has been forced to go long, all the way to the Philadelphia public school system to be its Big Cheese. Or in the case of Philly, its Big Cheesesteak.

Vallas is presiding over one of the most sweeping school reorganization programs in U.S. history. It's an experiment with privatization that is without precedent, according to some published reports. Out of more than 200 schools, the district has turned over about 45 low-performing schools to seven outside groups and for-profit companies while implementing a management overhaul in approximately 25 more schools.

It's a huge task, and Vallas is going to need an edge. I can help. We'll call this, then, "An Illinoisan's Guide to Philadelphia." Here are some tips for Vallas as he makes the transition

Vallas is presiding over one of the most sweeping school reorganization programs in U.S. history. It's an experiment with privatization that is without precedent, according to some published reports.

from "The Windy City" to "The City of Brotherly Shove."

- Philadelphia sports fans, while knowledgeable, possess short fuses. Among the things that should not be suggested is that Philadelphia really didn't invent the soft pretzel and that the soft pretzels in Chicago are every bit as good. This will only result in a trip to the doctor to answer the question, "How did this pretzel get into your ear?"

- Consequently, try not to get involved in the cheesesteak wars. Everybody has his or her favorites. The main thing to remember is that Philadelphians consider Cheese Whiz

a real cheese, and to snicker at that suggestion could present a real threat to the ear that doesn't contain a pretzel.

- Do not go to New Jersey. The state will let you in, but won't let you out without paying a toll. In reality, it's a brilliant plan by state lawmakers to raise money because they know nobody wants to stay in New Jersey.

- Pay particular attention to the "Beware of Falling Rock" signs. This is not something we need to worry about in the Midwest as there is really little need for, say, "Beware of Drooping Cornstalks" signs. But Midwesterners need to realize there are mountains in the northeast, they are too close to the roadways and rocks will fall on cars. Be advised that "Falling Rock" is different from "Rolling Rock" and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation is asking motorists to stay alert while driving rather than using public funds to advertise the state's favorite beer. It took me a month to figure out why bartenders were unable to serve up a cold, frosty Falling Rock.

- Adapt to the local vernacular. The correct way to greet people on the street is "Ha-ya doin'?" The correct way to greet people on the telephone is "Ha-ya doin'?" The correct way to greet the dog is "Ha-ya doin'?" The people of Philadelphia do not think it's funny when others make sport of the way they talk. And they will show their

Finally, do not be intimidated by the East Coast attitude. Make sure the Easterners understand that inner-city public schoolchildren need help in all parts of the country and that you're just the guy for the job.

displeasure by stuffing an outsider into a trunk, traveling across the river into New Jersey and demanding an answer to the question, "Just how funny is that beer commercial now?"

• Don't worry about guys named Ryan, Daley or Madigan. Worry about guys with ethnic-sounding names who claim to be in "waste

management." In other words, East Coast lawmakers, who have made a habit of wasting management.

• Learn the players. Mayor Street is not actually the name of a downtown thoroughfare. He's really the boss in Philadelphia. Let's hope he treats his schools chief a little better than Mayor Daley did.

• Finally, do not be intimidated by the East Coast attitude. Make sure the Easterners understand that inner-city public schoolchildren need help in all parts of the country and that you're just the guy for the job. If they don't believe that, then explain to them the political intricacies of getting a driver's license in Illinois, let alone running a public school system.

Now that should impress even the Philadelphians. □

Mike Morsch can be reached at 217-206-6521 or by e-mail at morsch.michael@uis.edu.

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There are a lot of unknowns

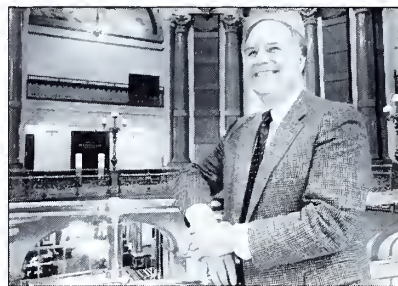
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Charles N. Wheeler III



The Libertarians are trying to buck history in the governor's race

by Charles N. Wheeler III

Cal Skinner is trying to do something no one has ever accomplished — become the first person elected governor of Illinois as a third-party candidate.

Since statehood in 1818, every Illinois governor has been a Democrat or a Republican, a tradition Democrat Rod Blagojevich and Republican Jim Ryan are battling to continue.

But Skinner, a former Republican state representative turned Libertarian, hopes to crack the duopoly this November with the support of Illinois voters disgruntled by the record of what he calls the “power parties” on key issues.

His targets include:

- Taxpayers. Skinner says he’s the only candidate voters can trust to veto tax increases and cut state spending. He argues that Blagojevich’s Democratic supporters would want more dollars for programs they favor, while Ryan would be following a quarter-century of GOP governors who pledged not to raise taxes, but did. Neither offered any budget-cutting specifics during the spring legislative session, he adds, while Gov. George Ryan and lawmakers were wrestling with the state’s \$1-billion-plus budget shortfall. Skinner makes one exception to his no-tax-hike pledge: levies on riverboat gambling. “I don’t care if you tax casinos at 100 percent, with all the implications that would have,” he says.

- Smokers. The two major parties

Cal Skinner already cleared one hurdle when GOP officials dropped their challenge to the Libertarians’ nominating petitions. Four years ago, Republicans succeeded in knocking the Libertarian slate off the ballot.

have been kicking cigarette smokers around for the last decade or more, Skinner contends, with the latest affront a 40-cent increase in the state tax on a pack of cigarettes signed into law in June. Both Blagojevich and Ryan were “missing in action” during the cigarette tax debate this spring, he argues. Moreover, Blagojevich proposed raising those taxes to pay for prescription drugs for low-income seniors, Skinner notes, while Ryan as attorney general signed Illinois on to the national tobacco settlement Skinner claims has raised cigarette prices.

- Tollway users. Skinner pledges to make the toll roads into freeways, paying off tollway bonds with gasoline taxes paid by tollway drivers and

covering operating costs with federal highway aid Illinois receives for toll roads. The toll highway authority currently gets none of the money; instead, the dollars are used for other state and local purposes. “Since the 1950s, people using the tollways have been paying twice,” Skinner says. “It’s only fair to free the ‘toll tax slaves.’”

- Gun owners. While Blagojevich and Ryan vie for gun control laurels, Skinner is a staunch advocate of Second Amendment rights, including legislation that would allow people to carry concealed weapons. “Imagine how much safer you would feel if every criminal had to worry that his next victim might be his last,” he says.

- Government reformers. Skinner lays much of the blame for the state’s fiscal and ethical difficulties at the doorsteps of the four legislative leaders whose main concern, he says, is staying in power.

As a remedy, Skinner is pushing term limits for leaders via a constitutional amendment that would put a six-year cap on leadership stints.

Skinner faces an uphill battle, of course, with neither the money — he had raised about \$13,000 and had roughly \$6,400 left as of June 30, compared to Blagojevich’s \$3.8 million and Ryan’s \$690,000 — nor the media attention that goes to the Democratic and Republican candidates.

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challenge to the Libertarians' nominating petitions. Four years ago, Republicans succeeded in knocking the Libertarian slate off the ballot, but this time Libertarians did a better job of collecting valid signatures.

Now, Skinner's immediate goal is to reach the 5 percent mark in media polls to claim a spot in the upcoming gubernatorial debates. Part of his problem is that the samples reported so far have listed only Blagojevich and Ryan, but make no mention of Skinner, whose ballot status was unclear for much of the summer.

Any support Skinner gains likely will come at Ryan's expense from conservatives who would never vote for the more liberal Blagojevich, but might find the Libertarian message appealing. State Sen. Patrick O'Malley pulled 28 percent of the GOP primary vote for governor in March with positions akin to Skinner's.

That prospect is a headache for Ryan, who trails Blagojevich badly in the polls. The Democrat's standing is due

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in part to the GOP's tarred image as a result of federal racketeering indictments of George Ryan's campaign committee, his former chief of staff and other political allies, all coming in the wake of the bribes-for-licenses scandal during Ryan's tenure as secretary of state.

But the public corruption playing field could be leveled in the coming weeks. U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald has indicted Michael Segal, an

insurance executive with close ties to Chicago Democrats, and has other party heavies under scrutiny. Indictments of Democrats could lead voters to conclude both major parties are tainted, narrowing the gap between Blagojevich and Ryan and perhaps opening the door for the Libertarian.

Although third-party candidates have garnered less than 2 percent of the vote in the last three gubernatorial elections, Skinner takes heart from the example of Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura. The former pro wrestler's independent candidacy was polling in single digits in September 1998, but he won a three-way race with 37 percent of the vote in November.

"The question is, have the people of the state of Illinois had enough yet?" Skinner asks. "If not this year, they never will." □

Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting Program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

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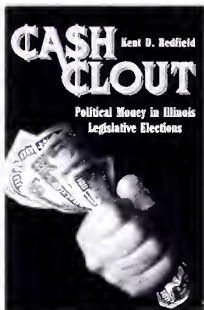
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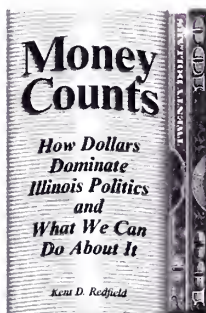
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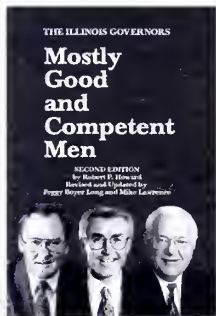
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